

Was the
Cold War
necessary?

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IN THESE TIMES

VOL. 16, NO. 2

NOV. 20-26, 1991

\$2.00

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David Moberg reports, page 3



Independent Ron Daniels wants to "offer some counter to the rightward movement of this country's political center."

The other black presidential candidate

By Salim Muwakkil

During the Washington, D.C., news conference last month at which Jesse Jackson announced he would forgo a 1992 presidential run, a reporter asked if Virginia Gov. E. Douglas Wilder's status as the only black candidate would gain him automatic black support. Jackson replied that Wilder is not the only black candidate. The two-time presidential candidate reminded reporters that Ron Daniels is running as an independent.

Not many journalists recognized the name. Although Daniels has been a major player in the field of independent politics for more than 20 years, he has remained largely behind the scenes. One of the reasons Jackson pointed to Daniels' candidacy was to goad Wilder—the two politicians are forever dueling. But Jackson also is well acquainted with Daniels and likely regards his independent candidacy with some sympathy, though—Democrat that Jackson is—without lending his support.

Daniels' connection to Jackson goes back at least to 1972, when they both participated in the pivotal National Black Political Convention held in Gary, Ind. Daniels later became president of the National Black Political Assembly, the group that emerged out of the Gary gathering.

During Jackson's 1988 presidential campaign, Daniels served as the reverend candidate's deputy campaign manager. Before that, in 1987, Daniels was executive director of the National Rainbow Coalition (NRC), the group that emerged out of Jackson's '84 presidential run and still

struggles mightily to define itself outside of Jackson's shadow.

Trailblazer Jesse: Until his NRC days, Daniels' remained pessimistic about the prospects for interracial coalitions. His focus was concentrated almost exclusively on independent black politics. He attributes much of his change to Jackson's pathbreaking efforts.

"I would never have thought of mounting this campaign 15 years ago," Daniels said. "Jesse proved that a black person could effectively lead a multiracial movement on the basis of issues. He forged unprecedented links between progressive whites and black activists."

But Daniels said one of the reasons he's running for president, under the auspices of the "Campaign for New Tomorrow," is to fill the vacuum left by the NRC's transformation into a Jackson proxy. "This is not just a political campaign for individual Ron Daniels running for president. This is intended to be a crusade, a movement with the goal of creating an independent third force in U.S. politics."

This may sound like the kind of grandiose rhetoric typically mouthed by starry-eyed third-party mavericks, and, in truth, it does sound a bit out of character for the normally understated Daniels. But the 49-year-old Daniels' two decades of experience in movement politics adds credibility to what would customarily be dismissed as campaign hype.

Building an independent third political force was also the goal many Jackson supporters had for the NRC, and those disgruntled supporters are Daniels' primary targets in his campaign's initial stages. During his stint as NRC executive director, Daniels developed contacts with kindred spirits across the country, and he's been trying to enlist their support since his September announcement. Though supportive, most are wary of making definitive commitments.

An array of choices: Daniels is well regarded on the left, but some left organizers are suspicious of what they consider Daniels' black nationalist leanings. Political progressives have also been slow to jump on the Daniels bandwagon because they suddenly are faced with a widening array of choices. Several independent campaigns are threatening to take off during the upcoming election season. Pulled by a vigorous draft, consumer activist Ralph Nader is considering an independent run; the National Organization for Women (NOW) is also making serious noises about mounting an independent, feminist campaign; and other groups have announced their intentions to join the fray.

"These are good times for independent campaigns," noted David Bethitis, senior research associate for the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies (JCPES), a research group that focuses on African-American issues. "The same anti-incumbency sentiments that surfaced in the recent elections could also be used to energize an independent political movement with an especially compelling message."

Just as there is opportunity during this political moment, there is danger. In a political culture dulled and cluttered by political platitudes and negative campaigning, some compelling messages have dubious social value. For example, there's little secret about the allure of David Duke's

message. In fact, messages about tribal loyalties, because they are among humanity's most primitive impulses, also are among the most compelling.

Opposition acquiescence: "One of the reasons I decided to go ahead and run a campaign was to offer some counter to the rightward movement of this country's political center," Daniels said. "That's one of the major reasons why the Democratic Party has become so impotent, it's merely chasing the rightward movement of the political center." According to Daniels, the Democratic Party—even its left/liberal, "Jacksonian" wing—has acquiesced in the nation's conservative swing.

Daniels' platform, in contrast, will sound familiar and dear to any devotee of left politics. It calls for the elimination of racism and all forms of discrimination, complete gender equality, demilitarization and conversion of the economy, a domestic Marshall Plan, and includes a host of other items from the left's wish list. Except for one plank demanding reparations for African-Americans, his platform could well have been lifted from Jackson's '88 campaign.

Daniels' strong focus on African-American reparations indicates how his campaign will differ from those of Jackson and others on the left. Much of his campaign effort

INSIDE STORY

will be used to challenge what he calls the cultural basis of racism. In focusing on the economic basis of racism, he said, the left tends to ignore other aspects of racism and underestimate its ubiquity.

"Where is the left's response to right-wing challenges of Afrocentricity and multiculturalism?" Daniels asked. "Where were the white left's challenges to the racism in Bensonhurst and Howard Beach? White supremacy is the cultural basis of racism, and white Americans need to fight that as vigorously as black Americans."

During a recent visit to Chicago, Daniels' itinerary embodied the ideological sweep he intends to include in his campaign. While participating in the Democratic Socialist of America's (DSA) national convention, he took time to cultivate contacts at a simultaneous gathering, the second annual African Centered Curriculum Conference. While the DSA crowd listened to Cornel West, Irving Howe and others on Chicago's North Side, the African Curriculum group heard presentations from learned Africanists such as Jacob Carruthers and charismatic polemicists such as Leonard Jeffries.

Movement rift: Black progressives increasingly complain that the white left's opposition to the Afrocentric movement derives from an unacknowledged allegiance to notions of white supremacy. And many whites on the left are pointing to the new black nationalism as a kind of racist one-upmanship that will impede rather than impel African-Americans' progress. This period of polarization in which we now live is not manifest just on the fringes or in Louisiana, it's also affecting life on the left.

Daniels wants to position himself at the center of this growing rift. He said it's essential to bridge those widening racial gaps and make clear the nature of the real enemy. "We have to fight crude expressions of racism and anti-Semitism within the black community," Daniels said. "But at the same time, we must also be clear about the centrality of the black agenda."

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(ISSN 0160-5992)

Published 41 times a year: weekly except the first week of January, first week of March, last week of November, last week of December; bi-weekly in June through the first week in September by Institute for Public Affairs, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647, (312) 772-0100. The entire contents of *In These Times* are copyright ©1991 by Institute for Public Affairs, and may not be reproduced in any manner, either in whole or in part, without permission of the publisher. Second-class postage paid at Chicago, IL, and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *In These Times*, 1912 Debs Ave., Mt. Morris, IL 61054. This issue (Vol. 16, No. 2) published Nov. 20, 1991, for newsstand sales Nov. 20-26, 1991.

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By David Moberg

DETROIT

AFTER ONE OF ORGANIZED LABOR'S WORST decades in history, under hostile Republican presidents, union leaders are savoring a moment of hope. It now seems possible—despite the bad odds given even earlier this fall—that a Democrat could win the presidency next year, running on a liberal, populist economic program dear to the heart of the labor movement.

"Everyone has come away from the last 10 weeks thinking Bush can be beat," said United Food and Commercial Workers Executive Vice President William Olwell at the biennial convention of the AFL-CIO last week. "You get the feeling there's a race out there."

The recession drags on, and the public mood has soured. Since perceptions—and personal experience—of economic recovery usually lag behind other economic indicators, misgivings about the president's economic performance are likely to linger well into next year. Bush's standing in public opinion polls is already sliding, especially on domestic issues, and a recent *Los Angeles Times* poll showed a generic Democrat defeating Bush. Bush's racial politics—now linked by many voters to David Duke—may also bedevil as much as they benefit him this time around.

Most emphatically, labor leaders took Democratic U.S. Sen. Harris Wofford's victory in Pennsylvania—which was celebrated at the convention like John the Baptist's prophecies in the wilderness—as not only a repudiation of Bush but an endorsement of labor's main issues.

"If Pennsylvania is real, if the domestic economy is bad, somebody with a strong populist message—like [U.S. Senators] Tom Harkin [of Iowa] or Bob Kerrey [of Nebraska]—will give Bush a real run," said Gerald McEntee, president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

Wofford, telling AFL-CIO delegates "your agenda is my agenda, and our agenda is Americans' agenda," offered this advice on how Democrats can win next year: "the first answer is a Democratic-labor partnership."

As organized labor has declined over the past two decades, so have the fortunes of Democratic presidential candidates. Democrats felt less and less of a need to "clear it with Sidney," as President Franklin D. Roosevelt did with Clothing Workers leader Sidney Hillman. They also decided they could ignore—even attack—union leaders. In 1984 Gary Hart labeled labor a "special interest." In 1988, in a symbolic incident, the campaign of Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis invited a major union president to a rally, then Dukakis introduced everyone on the platform but him.

Organized labor, by losing both its numerical clout and its claim to moral leadership as a broad social justice movement, contributed to the deteriorating relationship. And labor's 1984 favorite, Walter Mondale, was less than impressive. But the dwindling ranks of union members still consistently vote Democratic 10 to 15 percent more than the general electorate, and union armies and money make a sizable difference in lower-profile races.

A good group: This year most of the Democratic presidential candidates are stressing broadly inclusive social programs, especially some type of national health insurance and

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Looking for the union label: Kerrey, Clinton, Brown, moderator Paul Duke, Wilder, Harkin and Tsongas.

Democrats labor to win the White House

a populist economic program that gives government a strong role in curbing the excesses of the Reagan-Bush era and in regenerating the economy (see accompanying story).

Harkin came to the convention and departed from its presidential forum as the delegates' overwhelming favorite. "He's the best of the group by far," said Machinist political director William Holayter. Atlanta Central Labor Council President Stewart Acuff added

"Everyone has come away from the past 10 weeks thinking Bush can be beat."

that "Harkin gives people reasons to vote against their worst instincts, against the National Rifle Association, against racist demagoguery. He's got what Ronald Reagan

should have taught the Democrats: you've got to speak from the gut."

Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton, who overcame many of the delegates' misgivings about his role in the conservative Democratic Leadership Council, and Kerrey, who disappointed the crowd with a tepid, unfocused presentation, were the apparent runners-up. Yet former California Gov. Jerry Brown, who turned off some delegates with his single-minded attention to the corrupting influences of money in politics, retained significant good will. Most delegates seemed to consider even their least favorite candidates, Virginia Gov. Douglas Wilder or former Sen. Paul Tsongas, as acceptable.

But looming over the debate was the vacillation of New York Gov. Mario Cuomo, a longtime labor favorite. "I think Cuomo can articulate the issues, and he's a person known to the American public," said Clothing and Textile Workers (ACTWU) President Jack

Sheinkman. "He could galvanize people quickly" to win a labor endorsement. But other labor officials have become disenchanted with Cuomo, a knight with ever more tarnished armor. "Cuomo is tough for us," AFSCME's McEntee said. More than 300,000 unionized New York state workers have been without a contract most of the year, and New York City employees resent Cuomo's pressures on them to make contract concessions.

The waiting game: After the bruising primary battle between unions backing Massachusetts Sen. Edward Kennedy and soon-to-be-President Jimmy Carter in 1980, the AFL-CIO unions agreed not to officially endorse candidates individually, in favor of waiting until one of the contenders could win two-thirds support from unions. In 1988 that meant labor sat out primary endorsements, but entered delegates on nearly all candidate slates to guarantee a labor pre-

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Candidates urge bigger government role in the economy

The Reagan-Bush years have been a time of middle-class hardship and political shortsightedness, the six Democratic hopefuls told AFL-CIO delegates in their first joint forum of the campaign, stressing that both government and unions have a role in reversing those trends.

Iowa Sen. Tom Harkin, whose father was a coal miner, most strongly identified with unions. "When I'm president..." he said, "every double-breasting, scab-hiring, union-busting employer in America will know that working people of America have a friend in the White House."

Virtually all of the candidates—with the partial exception of Virginia Gov. Douglas Wilder, who emphasized the need for fiscal prudence—insisted that government must play a more strategic role in guiding the economy, supporting education (Head Start, apprenticeships, college aid and adult retraining), financing research and development and investing in basic infrastructure.

While all also touched on the need for health-care reform, Nebraska Sen. Robert

Kerrey and former California Gov. Jerry Brown most clearly advocated a single-payer national health-insurance plan. Harkin, who has been vague on specifics, said afterward that "the Canadian system may be a basis on which we might start."

Former Massachusetts Sen. Paul Tsongas and Wilder were, in different ways, the most conservative candidates. All except Tsongas strongly endorsed the top labor legislative priority, banning the use of permanent replacement of strikers. Tsongas preferred compulsory arbitration of all disputes. Yet Tsongas also best articulated the need for a national economic strategy—emphasizing investment in education as well as research and technology—to bolster the country's manufacturing base.

Harkin most forcefully called for "getting tough on trade." Both Brown and Wilder agreed with Harkin's vote against "fast track" authority for the president to negotiate a free trade agreement with Mexico. Kerrey won no applause for saying he "reluctantly" voted for fast track, which Arkansas Gov. William Clinton also supported.

Clinton, who offered the most developed education plan, said his economic policies would be determined by one question: "What does it take to compete and win in the global economy?" Like Tsongas, Clinton emphasized education and government aid to business to make the U.S. more competitive within a largely free-trade regime. Harkin, who emphasized domestic infrastructure investment, favored managed trade policies and tougher protection against unfair trade. Both Brown and Kerrey, despite his fast track vote, also saw some need to manage trade to protect American workers while investing public money to rebuild the economy.

Clinton argued that while he would expand opportunities for students, workers and the poor, he would also pose "challenges"—higher educational standards, more cooperative working environments and "an end to welfare as we know it."

Brown struck the most distinctive note in his forceful, repeated insistence that no progressive policies had a chance until the

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Schooling in capitalist America

To most Americans, school board elections are simply bland, back-page news or, at best, grist for bad Barbara Eden movies. But in Columbus, Ohio, this year, the race for the city school board was considered "the hottest election in town." Seventeen candidates, from every part of the political spectrum, ran for four slots on the Columbus district school board. After smoke had cleared, Mary Jo Kilroy, a member of the Democratic Socialists of Central Ohio, had finished fourth—qualifying for the board's first slot and defeating a host of better-financed Republicans and Democrats. Kilroy, whose two daughters attend Columbus public schools, won by directly addressing the problems facing the city school district. Kilroy dealt bluntly with busing—a volatile issue in Columbus, where the school population is about 50 percent Asian and African-American. Instead of calling for "neighborhood schools"—the anti-busing codeword employed by most of Kilroy's opponents—she insisted that schools "not be resegregated"—even if busing must be used as a stopgap solution. In a post-election interview, Kilroy told *In These Times* that narrow attacks on busing must not replace substantive debate about the fundamental inequality of American schools. Kilroy says her message is particularly appropriate in Columbus, a city that has seen many wealthy, and nearly all-white, neighborhoods ceded into neighboring suburban school districts—thus destroying the city school district's tax base. Claiming that it's impossible to teach kids who are unhealthy, Kilroy also made national health care an integral part of her campaign. In addition, Kilroy supported a controversial Planned Parenthood sex-education program—a subject other candidates either attacked or avoided. Kilroy's media consultant, Bob Fitakis, who's contemplating a run for Congress in 1992, says that Kilroy's campaign shows "people will support a candidate who is willing to talk honestly and frankly about what she believes." Said Fitakis: "If it can happen in Columbus, Ohio, it can happen anywhere."

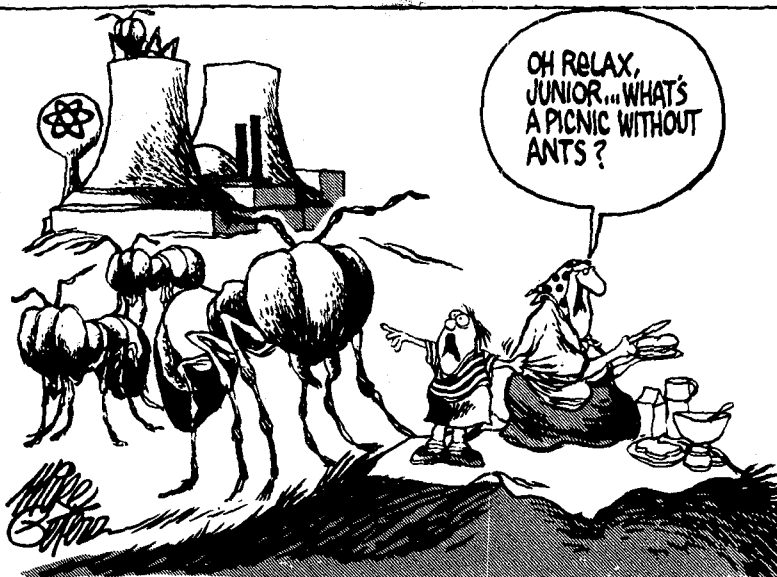
Which side are you on?

Esther Herst, a Chicago native, moved to Seattle in 1986. Like most transplants to the Pacific Northwest paradise, Herst, executive director of the Washington state National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), had few regrets about the move—until recently. On election day two weeks ago—as it became clear that a NARAL-backed voter initiative on abortion was too close to call—Herst suddenly wished she was back in the City of Big Shoulders. "At least in Chicago," Herst laughs, "I could've found somebody to stuff the ballot boxes." The controversial initiative was designed to ensure that abortion remains legal in Washington if *Roe vs. Wade* is overturned. The vote was so close that a final determination on the election will have to wait until late November, when all absentee ballots have been counted. As *In These Times* went to press, voters for the initiative, known as Proposition 120, outnumbered voters against it by only 144 votes—in an election where more than 1.5 million ballots were cast. Opponents of the initiative, despite receiving \$480,000 from the Catholic Church and Church-affiliated groups, portrayed themselves as pro-choice advocates. These pro-choice/anti-initiative forces told voters that passage of Prop 120—which called for equal access to abortion and maternity care—would increase state taxes and attract women from other states seeking free abortions. Consequently, Herst says the strong "no" vote resulted from voter confusion about the initiative and not from opposition to abortion. "There shouldn't be any confusion here," Herst says. "Washington is definitely a pro-choice state." Although Herst believes the initiative will pass by a slim margin, she says, "I don't think we ran as effective a campaign as we should have. We should have made the message stronger that this initiative is insurance for when *Roe* goes down—and it will go down."

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Joel Bleifuss is on vacation.

IN SHORT



Reservations about Hanford Nuclear Reservation

HANFORD NUCLEAR RESERVATION—Hanford, the nation's 560-square-mile nuclear reservation in Washington state, produced the plutonium for the bomb dropped on Nagasaki. Since that rush job, Hanford has grown into a large collection of mothballed reactors, buried atomic submarine cores and radioactive waste "tank farms." In the early days, when Hanford's reactors produced and refined bomb-grade plutonium, General Electric was one of the main contractors doing the government's nuclear work there.

Now, Westinghouse is the lead contractor for the Energy Department's cleanup plans. Despite the change of corporate players, critics say the danger to the environment and Hanford's downwind neighbors remains.

"Poor Westinghouse," crooned the company public relations official who drove me around the sprawling desert complex, explaining that Westinghouse is just trying to clean up someone else's mess. A sign painted on a water tower next to one facility read: "Work safely." A huge bug buzzed up to our windshield. "Must be a mutant," the public relations official exclaimed laughing. Remembering she had a journalist next to her, she quickly corrected herself. "Just joking," she said. "A joke."

Perhaps. But the farmers who grew potatoes, beans and other crops outside Hanford used to have a joke, too. "Hanford never did nothing but deform and kill a few sheep from time to time," said Mesa farmer Tom Bailie. Farmers used to laugh at such statements, never really believing the nuclear weapons production site was all that dangerous.

But when a reporter started looking into the stories about those deformed sheep in the mid-'80s—long after most of Hanford was closed down—the joke turned out to be serious. Furthermore, Bailie discovered that in the one-mile radius around his house, almost every farm family had at least one member who had contracted serious health problems.

Bailie's personal list of health problems is long. He was born with undeveloped lungs and had to be in an iron lung. As a child, his hair fell out several times. He started first grade on crutches and braces. He has sebaceous cysts all over his body. He is susceptible to kidney infections. He is sterile. And he is on medication for thyroid problems.

Furthermore, Bailie's mother, his father, three uncles and two younger sisters have all contracted cancer. When he was a child, Bailie said, he remembers government workers visiting the farms to collect vegetable and milk samples as well as dead animals. An Air Force bus, he said, periodically took area children to a military health unit in town that offered free X-rays and other services. Bailie said he remembers one year when all the coyotes and jackrabbits died by the side of the roads.

But few people asked the obvious question. "It was our business to farm," he said, "theirs to make bombs. We knew what they were doing."

By the mid-'80s, however, people began to question. Official documents revealed that the government had purposefully and secretly released radioactive iodine from Hanford in an experiment known as "the Green Run." While the Air Force maintains classified status on portions of Green Run documents that may explain the purpose of the release, most observers believe the experiment was designed to calibrate instruments for detecting atmospheric radiation.

Apart from the Green Run, however, Hanford has leaked a substantial amount of radioactive material into the soil, groundwater and air. Major studies are now trying to reconstruct the dosage levels nearby residents have experienced over the years and what the health effects have been. A lawsuit is making its way into the courts on behalf of the victims.

Hanford's official mission, meanwhile, has turned from plutonium processing to cleanup. (When he was president, Ronald Reagan proposed starting up one of the old reactors, but that idea finally seems to have died.) There are about 1,100 different items to be cleaned up at Han-

ford, divided into 78 working groups.

The Energy Department has set up a 30-year cleanup timeline with the state of Washington and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). However, it has already delayed some central cleanup initiatives. Congress is unlikely to appropriate enough money to keep the cleanup on schedule.

While the Westinghouse public relations official assured me that everything is "under control at the moment"—even if everything is not safely sealed in permanent storage—she admitted that engineers are still "trying to figure out simply what's in the [waste storage] tanks. ... What [the chemicals inside] become when they get together is a bit concerning."

Apart from technical questions, troubling information was uncovered this past summer by Congress and the Inspector General's Office concerning Hanford's security force—which was deputized by the local sheriff, enabling members to make arrests. Against government regulations, the security force has purchased sophisticated eavesdropping and wiretapping equipment and upgraded other equipment.

While the responsible parties deny using the equipment to spy on Hanford employees or others contrary to regulations, whistle-blower engineers at Hanford have long suspected their phones have been tapped and have complained of harassment. One engineer was threatened with the loss of her job, ordered to see a psychiatrist and eventually transferred after she refused to OK the pumping of radioactive material from one tank into another. She was afraid an explosion might take place. The Department of Labor has since found that she was harassed for revealing a safety problem.

When Bailie first started talking about the health problems he suspected could be traced to Hanford, none of his neighbors wanted to hear what he had to say—if their land was hot, how could they sell their crops? They would grow quiet or even walk out of the local greasy spoon when he approached. When the bank threatened to foreclose on him, Bailie said, his banker said the matter was out of his hands. Bailie had to stop speaking out if he wanted to retain his land.

But Bailie has since been vindicated by documents and studies. He managed to hold onto his land and is now accepted again by his fellow farmers.

"I am right," he said. "And those assholes were wrong in what they did to us. And we're going to find out who they were. I see them as no different from Dr. Mengele. These people are as low as Hitler's boys or worse. Who gave them the right to play god with our lives?"

Mark Feinberg

By W.K. Burke

OF ALL THE PLANET'S ECOLOGICAL AFFLICTIONS, the most common—and most commonly overlooked—is the steady deterioration of local landscapes. Truly native ecosystems have become rare. Some, such as native prairies, are almost extinct in the wild. Others, especially watersheds, are rapidly being degraded by unchecked development.

Now a new scientific discipline is reversing those threatening trends.

It is called restoration ecology. Since the '30s, restoration ecology has grown from an

ENVIRONMENT

oddball notion to a national movement. Restoration projects have rescued America's native prairies from extinction and brought new life to New England rivers and California salmon streams. Wetlands restoration has become a profitable industry.

Volunteers make up the heart of the non-profit restorationist movement. Under the guidance of trained ecologists, these retirees, schoolchildren and environmentalists become weekend botanists and gather seeds, burn scrub and plant seedlings. Then they step back and let nature take its course. John Berger, founder of the Berkeley-based Restoring the Earth, says he hopes such projects will spread respect for the subtle, easily disturbed patterns of life around us.

"We need to focus our energy on making better use of the resources we have already disturbed rather than continuing to just spoil the rest of the planet," Berger says. "Let's be a little more frugal with our resources. Let's stop wasting. Let's stop unnecessary damage to resources."

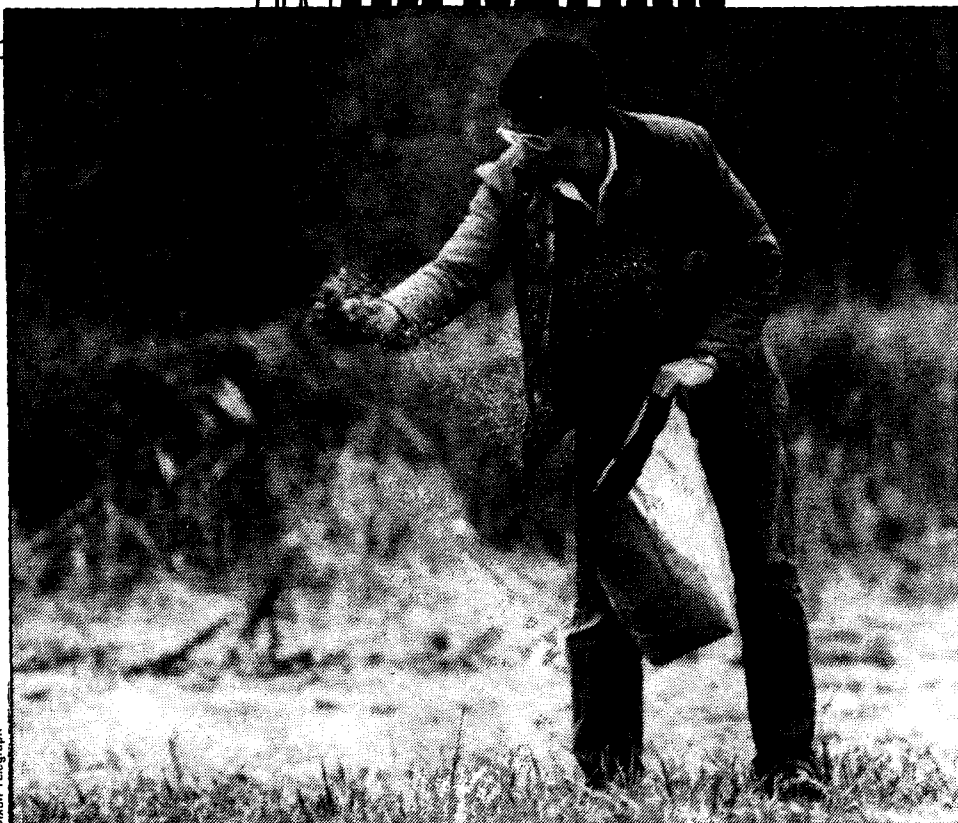
Heal and exploit: But while restoration ecology's pioneers have laid the foundations of a national movement for ecological rebirth, powerful interests, including the White House, have sought to distort the restorationist ethic by suggesting that restoration can replace protection of the remaining unspoiled natural areas.

In fact, the Bush administration and conservative members of Congress are promoting policies that would use restoration to sanction widespread ecological destruction. Bowing to the wishes of the nation's developers, the administration and Congress are primed to allow the filling in of vast areas of wetlands, while hiding behind a fig leaf of restorationist rhetoric.

Wetlands habitat is crucial to both wildlife and people. Swamps, bogs and fens purify water and prevent floods. They are essential to the life of waterways and forests. Animals from black bears to bluefish depend on wetlands. Acre for acre, they are probably the most productive ecosystems on Earth.

When Europeans first colonized the U.S., it had about 221 million acres of wetlands. Some 96 million acres remain. About 300,000 of those acres are filled in each year for roads, malls and farmland.

Wetlands restoration is the only form of ecological restoration that has become an industry. This is due largely to section 404 of the 1972 Clean Water Act, which requires developers to seek permits to drain wetlands and to "mitigate" any wetlands damage, usually by restoring former wetlands in more convenient locations.



Restorationists have rescued America's native prairies and brought new life to wetlands.

A swampy political issue: Can ecosystems be rebuilt?

No net loss: While running for president in 1988, George Bush proclaimed his administration would follow a "no net loss" of wetlands policy. The no net loss concept was originally formulated by a joint working group of the National Wildlife Federation, the Conservation Foundation and developers to improve wetlands protection under the Clean Water Act. Theoretically, the policy puts "avoidance," or wetlands preservation, first and allows mitigation only where absolutely necessary.

Environmentalists felt that the original federal policies for implementing the Clean Water Act's wetlands protections were much too lenient. The Army Corps of Engineers, itself the most industrious—environmentalists would say notorious—drainer of swamps in U.S. history, was in charge of issuing permits for developers seeking to fill in wetlands. But the Corps rarely required developers to rigorously explore an "avoidance" strategy: moving the sites of planned malls or subdivisions to avoid disrupting wetlands.

Instead, the Corps almost always accommodated developers, as long as they promised to restore other wetlands to replace those they filled in. But wetlands restoration is an infant science. And while non-profit restorationists will patiently endure years of failure until their projects flourish, the commercial wetlands restoration companies developers hire must work fast. A recent Florida study of restored wetlands found that only 27 percent performed as well as developers had promised.

But Mark Krause of Environmental Concern, a Maryland company specializing in restoring wetlands, insists a no net loss wetlands strategy based on restoring wetlands is not only possible but practical. "It's not that it can't be done; it's that a lot of unqualified people are trying to do it," he says.

Krause explains that a prime reason for the high failure rate is that wetlands experts are not brought in soon enough in the planning process. Developers neglect wetlands issues until they are locked into construction

schedules and contracts. Then they offer the restoration projects to companies promising the quickest, cheapest remedies.

The environmentalists who conceived no net loss intended it to prevent such fast-money restoration schemes. According to Steve Moyer, legislative representative with the National Wildlife Federation, no net loss has shown promise. "Since the Bush administration came to office, the Corps of Engineers has heard the call and done a much better job of protecting wetlands," Moyer says.

Promises, promises: But apparently, protecting wetlands is one campaign promise Bush kept too well. In August the president announced a proposal for modifying the no net loss policy that will remove most of the emphasis on preserving wetlands and make wetlands protection even more dependent on the commercial restoration industry.

The environmentalists who backed Bush's original no net loss policy feel betrayed. "I think it is clear that those high up in the administration didn't really understand what they were getting into" when Bush embraced no net loss, says Moyer. "[Bush's plan] is a ruse or a scam to diminish wetlands protection under the Clean Water Act. We're going to have more bad restoration and less holding developers to avoid [destroying wetlands] in the first place."

How to help

Non-profit ecological restoration efforts depend on volunteers. To find out about restoration work in your area, or how you might start a project to revive your nearby stream, write to either of these organizations:

Restoring the Earth, 1713C Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley, CA 94709, or Society for Ecological Restoration, 1207 Seminole Highway, Madison, WI 53711.

—W.K.B.

This subtle shift in political emphasis makes the difference between ecological restoration that heals the planet and restoration work that sugar coats environmental destruction. If pressure is put on developers to include wetlands experts in the initial planning stages of building projects, they are more likely to avoid building on wetlands. And if restoration work is subsequently required, it will be more likely to succeed.

But pressure to include ecological considerations in economic decisions is precisely what Bush and his allies in Congress oppose. (A bill similar to the president's no net loss proposal has been introduced in the House by Louisiana Democrat Jimmy Hayes.) Developers want Bush and their other Washington allies to sell the public a charade of environmental "management" by pretending that restoration can replace conservation—that wetlands can be switched around like living-room furniture.

"We've already given up 56 percent of our wetlands, and the country is showing stress because of it," says Bill Reffarty of the Wilderness Society. He cited New Jersey's Great Swamp, which is losing its ability to purify the water entering the Passaic River, as one example of the typical pattern in which wetlands destruction is followed by increased flooding and pollution.

Nationwide, the destruction of watersheds "has not reached the stage of endangering human health yet," Reffarty says. "But I don't think we want it to. We have options. We can put the shopping malls somewhere else."

Green is groovy: The growth of restoration ecology poses another problem. "One of the deepest, slipperiest pitfalls of restoration is an attitude that every ecosystem can be replaced," writes Seth Zuckerman in *Helping Nature Heal*, an anthology of restoration accounts recently published by Ten Speed Press.

This attitude that restoration represents a new kind of human mastery over nature appeals to industries seeking to camouflage, rather than reform, business practices that exploit nature. A recent Chevron ad shows deer frolicking in a restored meadow that once was a strip-mine: "Do people really repair the past just so nature can have a future? People do," reads the ad. Of course, the ad doesn't mention that, if the oil industry gets its way, that future will include continued pollution of air, land and water from increased oil drilling, refining and consumption.

Chevron has apparently latched onto restoration as a means of greenwashing their corporate reputation. They recently agreed to give \$10,000 to help the Society for Ecological Restoration (SER), the most important national information clearinghouse for restoration ecologists, expand its database.

Fortunately, the "green is groovy" boosterism of corporate public relations gestures is not likely to corrupt non-profit restoration organizations such as SER and Restoring the Earth. "It's greedy of us to try to get every last inch of land and leave nothing for nature. By doing that, we wipe out unique and valuable habitat for a lot of species," Berger says. "We need both restoration and conservation. We shouldn't be forced to choose one or the other. When people get involved with restoration, they begin to appreciate the complexity and value of ecosystems. They become less inclined to sanction destruction." □

W.K. Burke writes regularly for *In These Times* on environmental issues.

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON, D.C.

AT ROBERT GATES' CONFIRMATION HEARINGS, witnesses described an ongoing debate within the Central Intelligence Agency over how to analyze Soviet behavior. The "commie-bashers," as Gates' faction was called, believed that the Soviet Union, as a Marxist-Leninist state, had an ideological commitment to seek world domination. On the other side, "com-symp," the faction of former analyst Melvin Goodman, believed that Soviet behavior followed the same rules as other great powers. Moscow's desire for ex-

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pansion and domination was not limitless, according to this faction, and was largely predicated on a need—however exaggerated—for security.

What was not made clear at the hearings was that this debate has been at the center of American foreign policy since 1947, if not before. Most major American initiatives, from the Truman Doctrine to Ronald Reagan's defense buildup, were based upon the commie-basher model of the Soviet Union. Which perspective was correct is central to the issue of whether the Cold War was really necessary.

Contestants in the dispute have recently taken to saying that the issue will only be resolved when the Soviets allow American scholars access to their archives. That is certainly true. But during the last decade, scholars and journalists have gathered considerable information from interviews with Soviet officials and from the archives of Eastern European Communists to make a strong case for the "com-symp" view of Soviet behavior. These findings also add weight to the conclusion that the Cold War was provoked and sustained by Americans misconstruing Soviet motives—and vice versa. The recent revelations have shed new light on the following episodes.

• **The Truman Doctrine:** In March 1947, the Truman administration called upon Congress to aid the Greek government in fighting a communist insurgency. Secretary of State Dean Acheson charged that the Soviets were seeking Greece's overthrow as a first step toward attempting to take over Western Europe and the Mideast. But historian Peter Stavakis discovered from interviews and from access to Greek Communist documents that Soviet dictator Josef Stalin had, in fact, repeatedly tried to dissuade the Greek Communists from attempting to seize power.

Writing in *Moscow and Greek Communism, 1944-49* (Cornell, 1989), Stavakis recounts how the Soviets initially honored an agreement with the British to restrain the Greek Communists. When the Greek Communists began a civil war in 1946, the Soviets cooperated with a United Nations investigation of the conflict.

By contrast, the Yugoslav Communists—acting independently—enthusiastically backed their Greek comrades. The Soviets finally agreed to aid the Greek Communists in May 1947 (after Washington had begun aiding the Greek government). They did so out of fear that the Yugoslavs would establish a competing center of Communist power in the Balkans. They had little interest in a Communist Greece. Indeed, according to



The Cold War: hot air and tragic consequences

Stavakis, they deliberately limited their support so that the Greek Communists would lose.

• **The Czech and Hungarian Coups:** In September 1947, Soviet-allied Communists in Hungary used rigged elections to seize power. In February 1948, Communists took control of Czechoslovakia. Both actions were widely understood as expressions of the Soviet drive for domination over Europe and the world. But historian Charles Gati, making use of Hungarian Communist files, has constructed a picture of a more cautious Soviet Union driven to act by American initiation of the Marshall Plan for aid to Western Europe.

Writing in *Hungary and the Soviet Bloc* (Duke, 1988), Gati relates how, after the war, the Soviet Union deliberately restrained Communist parties in Hungary and Czechoslovakia (as well as in Italy and France) from taking power. The Soviets were primarily interested in consolidating their control over Poland, Bulgaria and Romania—states that had in the past been avenues for invasion against Russia.

According to Gati, the Soviets took control of other Eastern European countries only after the United States set Marshall Plan terms that Moscow found unacceptable. The United States demanded that the Soviet Union, still reeling from the war, be a contributor rather than a beneficiary of aid. When Poland and Czechoslovakia expressed

interest in joining the Marshall Plan, the Soviets feared that Washington was trying to create a new cordon sanitaire in Eastern Europe and moved to consolidate their hold over the region.

• **The Korean War:** When North Koreans invaded the South in June 1950, the invasion was seen in Washington as the beginning of a worldwide communist offensive. But at a conference of American historians with Soviet historians and officials in December 1989, Soviet officials told a different tale. According to Stephen Ambrose, who was present at the conference, the Soviets revealed that when North Korean leader Kim Il Sung met with Stalin in February 1950, Stalin tried to discourage him from attacking the South. Stalin finally assented only after Kim Il Sung won Beijing's eager approval of the invasion. In North Korea, as in Greece, Stalin was more concerned about maintaining hegemony in the communist movement than about expanding communism into other countries.

New CIA Director Robert Gates was among those who thought Moscow wanted world domination. They were apparently wrong.

• **The Berlin Wall Crisis:** In October 1961, the U.S. and the Soviet Union staged an armed confrontation at the newly built Berlin Wall, with 10 Soviet tanks facing 10 American tanks at Checkpoint Charlie. This was as close as the United States and the Soviet Union ever came to war in Western Europe, and for three decades, many American policy experts blamed Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev for the confrontation. But through interviews with Soviet officials, Brookings Institution political scientist Raymond L. Garthoff learned that the Soviets had good reason to believe that the Americans had precipitated the incident.

As Garthoff recounts (in the fall 1991 issue of *Foreign Policy*), Kennedy administration officials claimed the confrontation began on October 22, when East Berlin border guards refused access to a U.S. diplomat because he would not present his papers to East German authorities. At the time the United States did not recognize the East German government, and would only deal with Soviet authorities in East Berlin.

In response, the U.S. diplomat summoned four tanks and eight U.S. soldiers to his side. He then was allowed to pass through. Reacting to the East German move, President John F. Kennedy's personal representative in West Berlin, Gen. Lucius Clay, moved 10 American tanks to the wall on October 25. The next day the Soviets brought in their tanks. The crisis finally passed after an October 28 hotline conversation between the Kremlin and the White House, in which both sides agreed to remove their tanks.

According to Garthoff, the Soviets saw an entirely different set of events. Unbeknownst to Kennedy—but not to the Soviets—Clay was considering an assault against the wall. Clay had conducted secret exercises—unsanctioned by the White House—with tanks, bulldozers and an imitation of the wall. The Soviets were not aware of the incident with the American diplomat on October 22, and they saw the subsequent movement of tanks as the beginning of Clay's offensive against the wall.

• **The Reagan buildup:** In the early '80s, conservative policy experts justified the American strategic buildup on the grounds that the Soviet Union was planning for the possibility of winning a nuclear war. According to KGB defector Oleg Gordievski, who told his story publicly in 1988, the Soviets were not making such plans. To the contrary, Gordievski asserted that, based on what Americans were saying and doing, the Soviets came to believe that the Reagan administration was ready to initiate a nuclear war. In 1983, the Soviets, fearing that a NATO exercise presaged a surprise attack, went onto war alert. Last year, a senior Soviet official in Washington, speaking on conditions of anonymity, confirmed Gordievski's account.

Forty years wasted: There were, of course, periods in the late '50s and mid-'70s when the Soviets did believe their own Marxist-Leninist propaganda. But from 1945 to 1985, Soviet actions generally resembled those of a successor-state to czarist Russia. Moscow was preoccupied with gaining hegemony on its borders, rather than becoming a communist behemoth out to conquer the world. Gates and the other "commie-bashers," from Allen and John Foster Dulles through William Casey helped lock the two nations into four decades of largely needless strife and extraordinarily wasteful expenditures. □

By Denis MacShane

MOSCOW

OCHIANIA IS THE RUSSIAN WORD HUGH MacDiarmid, the Scottish Marxist poet, used to describe the gangs of louts in the depressed Glasgow of the 1930s. *Ochiania*, so a footnote to a poem squeezed in between one of his "Hymns to Lenin" states, is a "Russian word meaning no belief, no love, no fear."

It sums up precisely the dominant mood in Russia today, several months after the

SOVIET UNION

failed putsch—an event that had most commentators frothing with excitement at a "world-historical revolution," to use the words of the leading American Sovietologist, Martin Malia, writing in the *New York Review of Books*.

But talk to people in Moscow, Minsk or St. Petersburg and the *ochiania* is palpable.

There is none of the exhilaration associated with revolution, no belief in the future, no love for anything. A handful of people and one brave populist, Russian President Boris Yeltsin, were all it took to vaporize the remaining Communist structure as it tried one last feeble puff for power. Like an empty wasp's nest that a passing wind blows away, the once-feared Communist organization was shown to have empty cells, no sting and no leaders.

Now all the problems, partly created by seven decades of Communist rule and greatly exacerbated by the pressure and demands from the West, stand exposed in their grim reality.

And Yeltsin, savior of today's "revolution," is much more like a dithering Kerensky than a clear-eyed and cruel Lenin with a total economic and political program ready to be applied no matter the sacrifice. Mikhail Gorbachov, whose name no longer emerges in political or economic talks with Russians, seems like some kind of reforming czar. His time is past, at least inside Russia, where the Kremlin is well on its way to becoming a museum like Versailles, not a source or seat of power.

The failed putsch, it is now becoming clear, has only complicated the political options facing Yeltsin, his advisers and the deputies in the Russian parliament. Before the putsch, there was broad support for Yeltsin as incarnating a national Russian democratic future against the all-union, or Soviet Communist past. Now Yeltsin has to deliver a complete political and economic program—and the economic strategy seems all but impossible to devise.

Yeltsin would appear to have three possible choices.

Capitalist retooling: His first choice is to opt for a full free-market program. But if he does, he will face a challenge from workers (and elected deputies as well as unions) as unemployment soars and purchasing power declines.

If Yeltsin chooses this path, one of his most formidable obstacles could be Viktor Utkin, the energetic 33-year-old head of the Independent Miners' Union (NPG). Utkin supported Yeltsin during the putsch, but the strike by his miners earlier in the summer showed the government's powerlessness in dealing with internal social unrest.

Utkin is also secretary of the Russian parliament's economic committee and, as such, is opposed to the latest free-market proposals and immediate privatization schemes advanced by Yeltsin's economic advisers and the Russian Council of Ministers. He em-

bodies the unsquarable circle that very few in the West understand. Politically and theoretically, Utkin supports privatization and a move to the free market. But, as a Russian parliament deputy and an independent workers' leader, Utkin has to answer to his constituents, who want to keep their jobs, live in low-rent housing and are becoming extremely bad-tempered about the Mercedes-Benz lifestyles of the business mafia. Russia's illicit entrepreneurs are making fortunes out of trading opportunities offered in a society without enforceable laws, regulations or any sense of public morality.

The crazed economy in Russia can be summed up in one set of prices and one factor of production. A bottle of vodka costs 35 U.S. cents, while printing 500 business cards costs \$110. Meanwhile, 1.3 million auto workers produce 1 million cars annually for a market of 300 million. In the U.S., half that number produce seven times as many autos.

To move even halfway to Western capitalist norms, there will have to be a price upheaval in Russia that will massively reduce the purchasing power—hence living standards—of most of the population. An enforced decollectivization of the workplace would most likely follow, pushing up to 30 million workers out of their jobs and onto the streets—more than the number of kulaks driven off the land by Stalin in the '30s.

But Russia in the '90s is not Russia of the '30s, Yeltsin is not Stalin and the secret police and Red Army are now apparently tame, peace-loving versions of the killers sent by Stalin to turn his theory into practice. And everyone—old nomenklatura union officials as well as independent worker activists—assures the visitor that there will be resistance to any radical free-market program.

In the face of strikes, social unrest or polit-

ical opposition from Russian deputies, Yeltsin may have to move to suppress opposition, suspend freedoms, perhaps even dissolve the Russian parliament, thus losing his valued status in the West as a democrat and post-authoritarian leader.

Second thoughts: Yeltsin's second option, a milder alternative to the neo-liberal shock treatment, is to try to maintain Soviet-style social protection while initiating a controlled, painless introduction to the market—a socialist privatization process with protection for the living standards of the Russian population.

Certainly, there is powerful support for a new post-communist corporatism from large industry managers, the military-industrial complex and the weakened but well-rooted official unions with their 130 million members.

Managers of big industrial concerns complain that they are losing their most skilled workers to the privately-owned businesses. (In Russia, the privately-owned businesses are known as "cooperatives"—an example of the confusing terminology in Russian political-economic discussion. The "left" are the rabid free marketeers, while the "conservatives" are the upholders of state intervention in economic affairs.)

Yeltsin has to deliver a complete political and economic program—and the economic strategy appears impossible to devise.



The failed Communist putsch has only complicated the options facing Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

The Russian mood: no belief, no love, no fear

Thus the opposition to a full privatization of the economy comes from more than those who hanker for a return to old-style communism. Calls for administrative measures to suppress the cooperatives, i.e., to root out private business, are increasingly heard. If he heeds them, Yeltsin will also have to adopt repressive measures against the 4.5 million people now working in this sector, as well as the well-entrenched semi-legal trading "mafia" currently making large profits.

But such a plan would face opposition from Russia's powerful "liberal" bloc, who—along with their powerful backers in Western capitalist circles—want a Polish-style leap to the free market.

Yeltsin's third option is to do nothing. But to drift along in a new era of stagnation would only deepen the frustration of Russian society and create even greater opposition and alienation.

Overcoming inertia: In Minsk, an hour's flight west of Moscow, the atmosphere is quite different from that in the \$400-a-night hotels of Moscow and Leningrad—the free-market emporiums filled with American bankers, German salesmen and neo-liberal Harvard economists. In Byelorussia, the hotels are old-style Intourist joints, smelly and shabby, with English-language booklets in the foyer dating from the Brezhnev era that denounce American imperialism and refer to Germany's "Hitlerite bandits."

At Minsk's giant tractor factory, the assembly line moves slowly. Many parts are missing. The factory receives raw materials and parts from 700 other firms in Russia and the Ukraine. Fragmenting those economic links for the sake of national currencies or prices will devastate production. The forces of inertia, for maintaining existing ways of production, may be much stronger than excited discussion in Moscow indicates.

Russia has absorbed the armies Napoleon and Hitler threw at Moscow's gates and may well see off the Harvard crazies who promise a free-market blitzkrieg. This is not to argue that a market economy of a sort appropriate to Russian conditions is not needed. On the

Continued on following page

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contrary, in a society where everybody owns everything and nobody owns anything, laws on property rights and on contract adherence need to be passed and, once adopted, will open the way to a dismantling of existing structures. Few foreign investors will put serious money into an economy that has no rules, no measures and no overall end.

One way for Yeltsin to maintain the nationalist and populist support that currently—and temporarily—unites his diverse supporters would be to export Russian populism across the borders into the neighboring republics, all of which contain sizable Russian minorities. The Serbian solution in Yugoslavia is not attractive, but history suggests that domestic difficulties can be overcome or pushed into oblivion by populist external activities.

Already Russian troops have been sent to put down a declaration of independence in the Russian federation's mostly Moslem autonomous region of Chechen-Ingush, whose 1.3 million people live on the border with Georgia. The Ukraine is raising an army of 450,000 and wants to print its own currency and conduct its own foreign diplomatic and trading relations. What will stop the Russians living in the Ukraine from acting like the Serbs living in Croatia? If they or their children are denied the right to a job, a house or their language because they are Russian, it will be perfectly normal to ask for protection from Mother Russia.

A man, a plan? No matter what course Yeltsin takes, the passage of events will be slow. Not Yeltsin nor his advisers nor the millions of ordinary Russians who have invested hope in him want anything but a peaceful

transition to a market economy. The trading mafia would doubtless like to step out of illegality to become Searsov and Roebuckovich. The St. Petersburg arms factories—800,000 of the region's 1 million metalworkers work in a defense industry enterprise—want to become like Sony or Hitachi, producing useful products at a handsome profit.

But to get from a lower stage of command-administrative communism to a higher stage of social-market capitalism is a task that requires a great deal of discipline, social acceptance of the project and, above all—though the word is unmentionable in Russia—a plan. So far, nearly all the advice and urging the Russians receive from the West is to adopt some kind of Pinochet program. Even the much touted South Korea model cannot be applied in Russia without flying in the face of free-market dogma—all banks in South Korea were nationalized in the '60s, and there was endless government interference in industry under a political dictatorship that made Brezhnev's regime look liberal in comparison.

Forcing Russia into Pinochet's Chilean mold may prove impossible unless a new terror is imposed—a terror as deep and repressive as anything Lenin or Stalin ordained. Today, everyone has a job and a roof over his or her head—even if families have to share a flat. There are hardly any beggars, far fewer than in London. At night, the streets feel safer than Manhattan. The airports are dirty, the roads are cracked, the lavatories pong. But at least the railways and airplanes are chock-full, carrying ordinary people, not a rich elite. There is education for all as well as primitive low-grade medical services.

If there is to be a second Russian revolu-

tion, following on the August days, then it may well prove to be bloody and authoritarian with a few foreign adventures, or a Pinochet or Suharto massacre of the enemy within. In this scenario, Yeltsin could ditch his recent democratic ways as quickly as he shed his communist skin. Or he may be much more of a provisional figure than current accounts allow for.

Of course, there are more hopeful scenarios. To read the elegantly crafted articles and books of Boris Kagarlitsky, darling of the East Coast's liberal lecture circuit, one might have the impression that a new communist politics, a reborn Trotskyism, based on factory soviets, was about to emerge in Russia. But even a week's tour of Russian factories and worker organizations shows that the picture Kagarlitsky paints for eager audiences in London and New York is about as close to reality as the promise of a revolutionary upsurge among American workers. The chances of a New Leftism, a Soviet-wide 1968-cum-1917 movement, growing in Russia are zero.

Marshalling Western aid: What is to be done? First, the West must make clear that it does not require a short, sharp shock to transform Russia into a Peru or a Bolivia. The Marshall Plan, which underwrote full-employment economies in Western Europe after World War II, needs updating and application to Russia. The most important and misunderstood aspect of the Marshall Plan was that it involved men as well as money. Hundreds of American New Dealers sat in ministries in London, Paris, Oslo, Rome and Frankfurt making sure that the Marshall Plan aid was not diverted to improper ends.

Throwing cash at Russia, either via the

republics or via Gorbachov, is useless. Western governments need to send government, company and public service administrators—not just businessmen eager to make a profit—to make sure that Western aid is properly spent. Like the Marshall Plan advisers, they could withdraw after a few years, but their presence is indispensable now.

More important is the need to differentiate between American interests and Western European interests in Russia. For the United States, the defeat of communism is like the arrival of the Franks in Jerusalem—it is the end of a century-long crusade. If Russia now devolves into a large Mexico or Brazil, that is of little consequence to the U.S., which prefers an impoverished and exploited south, the more to flatter itself on its own way of life.

But the rest of Europe cannot afford to see Russia become a giant-sized Peru or Bangladesh on its doorstep. For Germany, France and Britain, to have 30 million unemployed Russians hammering on their doors for jobs would be a nightmare. The same is true for Japan, whose commitment to Russia could quickly awaken once Yeltsin concedes the Kurile Islands, as much use and about the same shape as the appendix is in the human body.

A European social market policy, supported with Japanese and Western funds, is the best and probably the only way out for Russia. But Russia needs Western leaders to allow it time and to admit that the best kind of market economy requires, well, shall we say, a few five-year plans for its successful implementation. □

Denis MacShane's book, *International Labour and the Origins of the Cold War*, will be published by Oxford University Press in 1992.

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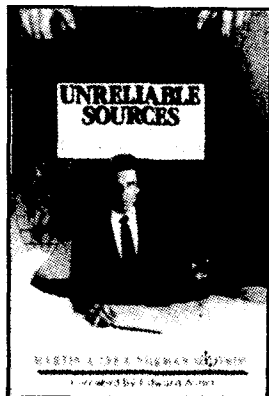
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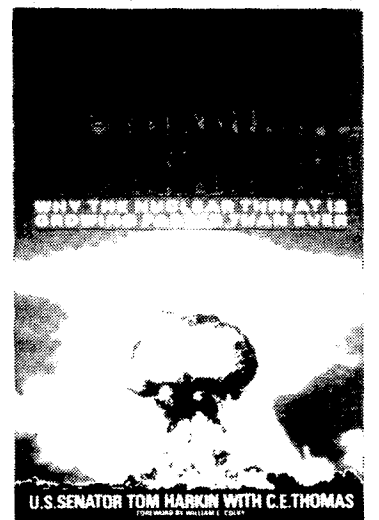
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By David Rocks

PRAGUE

BEFORE THE NOVEMBER 1989 REVOLUTION, Czechs and Slovaks used to tell a joke about the difference between capitalism and communism—in a capitalist system, they would say, man exploits man. Under communism it's the other way around.

Now, two years after the downfall of Czechoslovakia's former Communist regime, the country's citizens are discovering the cruel truth of the joke. In post-communist, nascent-capitalist Czechoslovakia, profiteering, speculating and price-gouging seem to be the watchwords, and most of the privatization that has thus far taken place—in the capital city, at least—is oriented not toward meeting the

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

needs of Czechoslovak citizens but rather toward serving the hordes of tourists that visit Prague daily.

The malling of Prague: Prague is changing, although it remains one of the most beautiful cities in Europe even as it becomes homogenized by the addition of Citibank, Ikea, Benetton and, soon, McDonald's. But the changes have taken away something that made the city special.

Before the revolution, Prague was a strange holdover from centuries past. Perhaps it was only because the former government didn't have enough money, but for whatever reason the city was allowed to deteriorate much as it had forever. It's no coincidence that Milos Forman filmed *Amadeus* here. Prague is indeed his native city, but it also looked pretty much like it did when Mozart visited here; few sets had to be built. Now, Prague looks more and more like any other European city every day, with omnipresent billboards tout-ing Sony, Minolta and Mercedes-Benz, and the old brick storefronts being torn out and replaced with plate glass.

Yes, the shops and goods in them are more attractive, and, once inside, as often as not the service comes with a smile. But while communism here certainly didn't foster much in the way of consumer satisfaction, it's not clear that the new Czechoslovak capitalism is doing much better. Instead of the bounty that was promised, private stores in the outlying areas offer pretty much the same goods they always did, albeit at higher prices. The cost of living jumped 50 percent over the first six months of this year.

In the center of Prague, prime locations are becoming currency exchanges or travel agencies for the tourists. Czechoslovakia now has 3,500 private travel agencies. Furthermore, the Czech Commercial Inspectorate has estimated that customers are overcharged in one-half of all retail transactions in Czechoslovakia these days.

In other words, other than causing a 5.6 percent unemployment rate and a 16 percent drop in industrial production, privatization has had little effect on the life of the average citizen. Prague is being turned into a sort of Disneyland for busloads of tourists.

The price of capitalism: Indeed, it might be said that Czechoslovakia has two economies—the Deutsche mark economy and the Czechoslovak crown economy. Prices for anything that foreigners want or need tend to be far above the abilities of average Czechs and Slovaks to pay for them. Foreigners are expected to pay—in hard currency—four to five times the average monthly salary here for an apartment. And there are two categories of restaurants here



Life becomes a commercial exchange

—those in which locals can afford to eat, where a meal will cost about \$1 to \$2.50, and those that are oriented toward foreigners, where the tab for two can range from \$30 to as much as \$150 in extreme cases. One newly privatized restaurant on Old Town Square is charging nearly 10 times what it did just six months ago for the same fare. Prague, it seems, is selling its soul for a handful of Deutsche marks.

While most here still accept the gospel that market economies work better than command ones and that profit is a great motivator that encourages efficiency, many are turned off by the profiteering of the new elite. And that, of course, does not lead the average citizen to have a terribly high opinion of the market, regardless of how well it works. In Czechoslovakia's old command economy, the shops were more or less full of low-quality goods, but at least people could afford them. And perhaps more importantly, the goods and services were intended for Czechs and Slovaks, not foreigners.

That realization, in turn, leads some to long for the "good old days." A poll this summer showed that while 55 percent of Czechs and Slovaks are in favor of the current trans-

formation to a market economy, 22 percent prefer the old centrally planned system. Few are pining for the secret police and the restrictions on travel, or even for the nastiness of waiters and shopkeepers. But people here are disappointed by the degradation of human encounters to mere commercial exchanges. They want to see some commerce, or some social functions, run for the good of the population, or even just because somebody said it should be done—any motive other than making money.

Saving an institution: The case of the Cafe Slavia comes to mind. It is an old Viennese-style coffeehouse in the center of the city, where elderly women and young students (including one budding playwright named Vaclav Havel in days gone by) pass the hours sipping coffee or tea, reading and arguing, or just watching the river flow by the over-sized windows. In short, it is a historic place with enormous charm that quite likely has never been profitable. If auctioned to one of the new businessmen who are now running the city—as had been threatened—the Cafe Slavia would either be gutted and turned into a fast-food restaurant or else priced at a level that the old women and

students could no longer afford. People were aghast at the prospect. And eventually, with the intervention of a few key government officials, the Slavia was taken out of the auction process and will now be given to the Academy of Performing Arts, which will, presumably at least, continue to run it in the way it has always been run.

The real tragedy: Despite such small victories, the revolution here—while led by a political organization earnestly named "Civic Forum"—seems to have created a new elite that is just as uncaring about the needs of the common person as the leaders of the old revolution. That should not be surprising, because it seems that any change leaves the lower echelons of society to fend for themselves, no matter what the rhetoric.

But in Czechoslovakia, the promises seemed more believable, perhaps, because they were being made by Vaclav Havel, who, after nearly two years in office, remains the most trusted politician in the country. People here still believe that Havel really is what he appears to be—a person who cares about the people he leads more than he cares about personal accumulation of power. (He must certainly prefer his current digs in the Castle to his former quarters in prison, and he probably doesn't mind being driven around in a shiny new BMW, but Czechs and Slovaks seem to forgive him even that.) Although Havel wasn't exactly dragged to the Castle kicking and screaming, he was more or less drafted and appeared to truly consider not accepting the draft.

And that may be what is so disappointing about what is happening here—that the revolution appeared to have so much promise, being led by one of the few truly honest public figures of the 20th century. To see that promise expropriated by profiteers and speculators seems a shame.

David Rocks is a freelance writer living in Prague.

People want to see some commerce, or some social functions, run for the good of the population, or even just because somebody said it should be done—any motive other than making money.

BOOKS FOR THE ACTIV(IST) READER

Breaking Bread

Insurgent Black Intellectual Life
bell hooks and Cornel West

In this captivating dialogue, hook and West create a spiritual, progressive, feminist, and ultimately organic definition of radical Black intellectuality. Their conversations range from liberation theology and personal conversion to Left organizing, popular culture, and the sexual politics of Black nationalism. Together they provocatively grapple with the many dilemmas, contradictions, and joys of Black intellectual life.

173 pages, \$12.00

Storm Signals

Structural Adjustment and Development Alternatives in the Caribbean
Kathy McAfee

McAfee not only critiques the capitalist development strategies of the IMF and the World Bank, she offers Caribbean-centered development alternatives based on grassroots organization, women's leadership, ecological sustainability, and defense of local cultures and communities. As Peggy Antrobus notes, this book "makes an important contribution to the debate on 'alternative development.' Its focus on the impact of economic and environmental crises on the lives of ordinary people, and the responses of non-governmental people's organizations is unique."

259 pages, \$15.00

Defending the Earth

A Dialogue between Murray Bookchin and Dave Foreman
Edited with an introduction by Steve Chase

According to environmental writer Stephanie Mills, this "historic, touching, and uniquely useful book...presents concisely and colloquially the current positions of two of the most courageous ecological visionaries America has produced." In it, Bookchin and Foreman explore their differing, though often overlapping, perspectives on environmental ethics, social justice and the best strategies for radical ecological activism.

150 pages, \$10.00

The Coors Connection

How Coors Family Philanthropy Undermines Democratic Pluralism
Russ Bellant

Bellant's carefully researched book cuts through the Coors family's PR attempts to clean up its political image by detailing the individuals, organizations, and causes consistently supported by the Coors family. A picture emerges of a family's frighteningly narrow vision of the American dream, and its willingness to support rightwing extremists who would undermine American democracy.

144 pages, \$9.00

Prime-Time Activism

Media Strategies for Organizing
Charlotte Ryan

According to Bill Fletcher, Jr. of the Service Employees International Union, this book "is an essential primer for all grassroots activists. It demystifies the media in such a way that the reader-activist gains a framework for understanding the propaganda industry of the United States and a new way to look at organizing and movement-building."

270 pages, \$12.00

CIA Off Campus

Building the Movement Against Agency Recruitment and Research
Ami Chen Mills

Mills draws important lessons from the on-going student, faculty and community movement against the CIA's multi-faceted involvement on U.S. campuses and offers hands-on organizing advice to political newcomers and seasoned activists alike. According to Phillip Agee, "This book is long overdue. The challenge set out is to restore, maintain and preserve the intellectual and moral tradition of higher learning."

200 pages, \$10.00

Looking Forward

Participatory Economics in the Twenty First Century
Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel

In an era when even so-called radical economists are embracing the market and other key features of capitalism as inevitable, this detailed and carefully presented alternative scenario can help keep visionary thinking alive. As Gar Alperovitz notes, Albert and Hahnel "push to the limits a conception of worker participation and control of enterprise—plus a notion of neighborhood or community consumer 'councils' to determine what the economy should produce."

200 pages, \$10.00

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NEW FROM SOUTH END PRESS

Beyond the



By Malu Halasa

Wearing a headscarf and a floor-length dress under her white lab coat, Majida Agal seems out of place in the hi-tech lab of a Persian Gulf scientific institute. But the 23-year-old physics graduate finds nothing incompatible in working with lasers and fundamentalist Islam.

"People are afraid of Moslems, and they should be," she says. "Our real strength is in Islam. We are nothing without it."

Part of that strength must be needed to wear an *abbayah*—the head-to-toe black cloak that is mandatory religious apparel for women—in the 110-degree inferno that is Kuwait. For Majida, the apparent restrictions of her costume are a symbol of freedom. "I

wasn't born like this. I decided to wear this uniform. It means I will not respond to just anyone."

Although Kuwaiti women are among the most highly educated in the Middle East, she doesn't believe they deserve the right to vote. "There are not so many really enlightened women," she sighs. "I don't care whether women are treated equally with men, because in this life we don't see justice. We live and die being tested."

Majida is chided by friend and chemist Anal Al-Mosler for taking her devotion to Islam only so far. Anal, who wears a skirt and jacket, says she would wear traditional Islamic dress only if she believed in a few basic rules.

"First, I should not work with men. I

shouldn't go outside. Actually, if a man hears my voice, it is not good."

A world of difference: But such "basic rules"—and their interpretation—vary from country to country. "Women in Indonesia have a different attitude to themselves than women in Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Africa or China. They may have this common denominator of religion, but the way it is practiced is extremely different."

And it is changing—for many reasons, including the Persian Gulf War. Just how did the war affect these women? According to Moslem historian Rana Kabbani, there are no pat answers.

"Some women will become more fundamental because of their experience, others will move politically to the left. The view

Through conquest and trade, it spread as far west as Spain and east as Malaysia and the Philippines. There are Moslem Iranian and Turkish speakers in the Balkans and the Central Asian Republic, as well as along China's Silk Route. In Pakistan, Bangladesh and north India, Islam has already influenced Sikh and Hindu conventions. Twenty years ago in Africa, it was mainly located in the north. Now, the religion stretches throughout the continent.

Contentious clothing Contrary to popular belief, there was no concept of veiling in 7th-century Arabia, the debauched society that gave birth to Islam. Like Christianity and Judaism, the Islamic *Qur'an* calls for modesty in both sexes. Women were told to cover that which was uncovered—their breasts.

The wives of the Prophet Mohammed first adopted veiling after being insulted at the mosque by worshippers who mistook them for slaves. By donning the veil, a custom initially from China and Persia, they immediately set themselves apart and the twinned concept of family honor and sexual modesty became the basis of Islamic society.

But, as Angela Davis noted when she visited Egypt in the '70s, the veil was an indication of class as well. Rural women rejected it due to its impracticality for work in the fields. It is no longer a common denominator among Moslem countries. In Mali, women go about their business bare-chested.

Egyptian Leila Ahmed, a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, notes that the veil became an issue only after French and British colonialists arrived in the region. "They said the only way for this inferior culture to modernize was to abandon Islam and the veil," Ahmed says. "This was the case made by male imperialists who were making the same argument about Moslems but opposed women's suffrage in their own countries."

To this day, the veil remains a contentious piece of clothing—more so in the West than in the East. Its impact, however, has been considerably less than the conservative laws passed against women in the increasingly religious countries of Algeria and Pakistan.

Veiling is relative "Don't confuse the issue of individual women wanting to veil themselves with coercion by laws or fundamentalists to keep them veiled," Ahmed says.

"Like the Marxist argument [that] what you see in the Soviet Union was not really Marxism but a corruption of Marxism, some fundamentalist feminists and believing Moslems say what you see today is a perversion of Islam."

When Algerian women were active in the armed resistance against France in the late '50s, clothing took on political meaning. Veiled women smuggled bombs past French army checkpoints. When they were found out, they switched to the miniskirt as another disguise to ensure freedom of movement.

After independence in 1962, women rose to the ranks of judges and lawyers, but their hard-earned gains were whittled away by the 1984 Family Laws. Today, women can be divorced on a whim and publicly beaten.

In her groundbreaking feminist treatise *Beyond the Veil*, Moroccan Fatima Mernissi notes that with rising levels of education and the postponement of marriage, a new phenomenon has entered Moslem society—the single, urban female professional. In Algeria, where 52 percent of the population is female and where unemployment among young males is over 20 percent, it's no surprise that

conservative religious leaders blame women for stealing men's jobs and urge them to stay at home.

Not even the first Moslem woman prime minister could stop the growing influence of the religious right in Pakistan. Benazir Bhutto inherited an Islamic republic from her father and the Hudood ordinances from Gen. Mohammed Zia al Haq. These are religious statutes that consider rape an admission of sex outside marriage by the woman victim, who is then arrested. In 1990, Bhutto's government was dismissed before harsh religion laws, the *Shariat* bill, were passed by the country's assembly.

"Pakistan is sliding into conservatism every year," says journalist Shazia Rafi, representative of Pakistan's All Women's Association to the United Nations. "In 1949, a woman served on the Supreme Court. Today we are almost passing laws that say women witnesses can't be equal to men in court."

Sometimes it is not only laws that are oppressive. The political instability of some regions has given rise to a climate of violence against women. When the Soviets pulled out of Afghanistan and Western aid to Afghan guerrillas was cut, fundamentalist groups,

operating out of the refugee camps in Pakistan, sold women into prostitution for arms money—a problem only now being broached by humanitarian organizations. On the West Bank, harassment of women by pro-Islamic extremists last year forced the Joint Leadership of the intifada to issue a pamphlet supporting women's right to choose non-traditional dress.

And while Palestinian women are considered the most independent and progressive in the Mideast due to their fight against Israel, their gains are relative.

"Women do run great risks, supporting their villages, defending their families, demonstrating on behalf of prisoners, all of it dangerous work," said Kitty Warnock, who taught at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank for four years and researched her study of Palestinian women in the Occupied Territories, *Land Before Honor*. "But a political activist once said to me, 'The great thing about being in prison is that you don't have to keep jumping up and down to make cups of coffee for the men.'"

Malu Halasa is a freelance writer living in New York.



Glenora Croucher

that somehow in these countries women have a homogenously repressed time is a very superficial view of what Moslem women's lives are like."

While life is hard for women in Yemen, where female mortality is high because men traditionally control health care, in Iraq, women are doctors, pharmacists, teachers and civil servants. In Saudi Arabia, not all women are banned from driving—only the educated and upper class Bedouin women drive pick-up trucks and other work vehicles.

Even when religious laws regarding women seem straightforward, they are not. Under the law School of the Twelve Shi'ia, Iranian women can be publicly flogged and stoned to death for adultery. Yet, the practice of *mut'a*, or temporary marriage—which can last from one hour to 99 years and requires neither a witness nor a legal document—has resurfaced in the past decade. Although acceptable to Shi'ite religious scholars, in other countries it is considered legalized prostitution.

Moslem women were thrown into the international spotlight during the Gulf War, as their veiled visages peered nightly from the television screen. For most Westerners, the veil is a symbol of oppression. But for Moslem women—especially today—the meaning of the veil runs the gamut.

In Kabbani's Syrian family, the veil was something her grandmother, inspired by Western suffragettes, tore off in the beginning of this century. Kabbani's secular mother raised her daughter in a similar way. In many countries, however, women of Kabbani's generation and younger are voluntarily donning the *hijab*, or Islamic headdress.

"A lot of these women are not from families that traditionally wore the *hijab*. For want of a better reason, I think you could call it Islamic militancy, but it is more of a disappointment with Western culture and with local government's inability to solve outstanding problems like the economy and the Palestinian issue. These societies are not what everybody hoped they would become after independence. This is why a lot of women across the Moslem world—from Malaysia to Morocco—have taken on the *hijab* in large numbers."

Like the names that describe it, the Islamic dress for women has many variations. Called the *chador* in Iran, the *milayah* in Egypt, the *yashmak* in Turkey and the *djellbah* and *haik* in North Africa, the veil has become a chic radical fashion statement. In Egypt, young women professionals are voluntarily wearing it in such great numbers that Cairo fashion shows introduce the latest styles. Polls have shown that for many Moslem women, choosing the traditional headdress is more a matter of style than the symbol of repression Westerners see. Meanwhile, in Turkey and Western countries such as Britain and France, Moslem schoolgirls clamour to wear traditional dress in public schools.

With more than 800 million adherents, Islam is the world's fastest-growing religion.

EDITORIAL

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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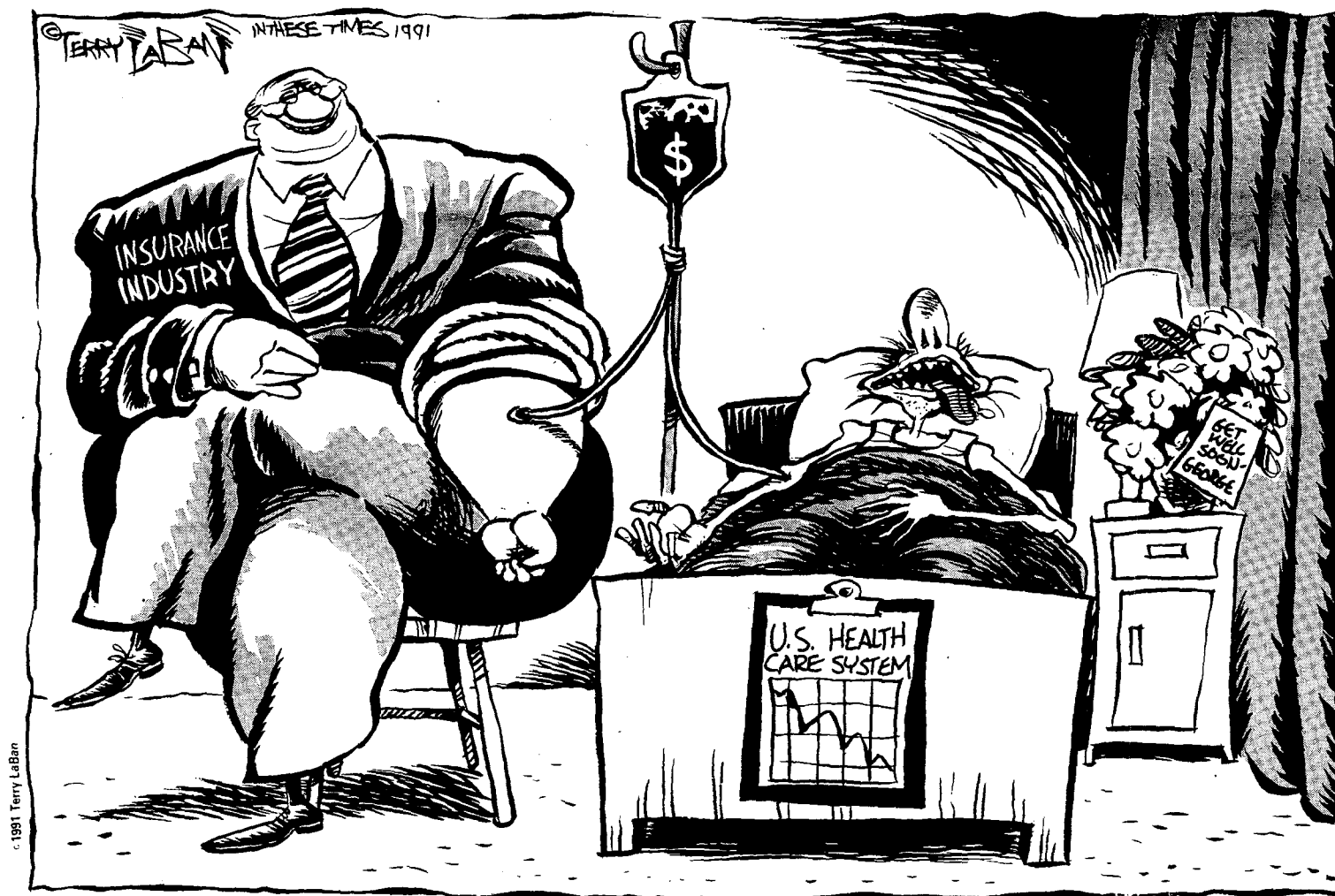
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(ISSN 0160-5992)

Published 41 times a year: weekly except the first week of January, first week of March, last week of November, last week of December; bi-weekly in June through the first week in September by Institute for Public Affairs, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647, (312) 772-0100

Member: Alternative Press Syndicate

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 This issue (Vol. 16, No. 2) published Nov. 20, 1991, for newsstand sales Nov. 20-26, 1991.



In health care, private market comes a cropper

In the wake of Harris Wofford's upset Senate victory in Pennsylvania two weeks ago, President Bush and Republican leaders in Congress are scrambling to get on board the health-care train. So are Democratic legislators and presidential hopefuls. But as Bush administration officials say—correctly—the election results cannot be read as an endorsement of any specific proposal. In fact, this is not one train but several. And they are going in different directions.

The main reason for this is that there are two health-care crises that have merged into one. First, there are 37 million Americans who have no health insurance and little or no money to pay for medical care. These people also have little political clout, since they generally do not vote and are unorganized.

Second, there are now untold millions of Americans whose traditional health insurance has been eroded or endangered. With escalating health costs, employers have been trimming insurance plans any way they can. They have switched insurers, begun to self-insure and promoted HMOs as well as other plans that limit employees' medical choices. They have also imposed greater employee cost-sharing in premiums and higher co-payments and deductibles.

All this has undermined health care without containing costs. At best, firms have managed to shift the burden to their employees. At worst, they have simply stopped providing health insurance. And, as medical sociologist Paul Starr points out, this "desocialization" of health insurance has increasingly exposed middle-income workers to the insecurities that had previously been the special domain of the uninsured poor. In effect, Starr writes, the market-driven responses of employers and private insurers are eliminating the traditional middle-income insulation from health costs that has made it so difficult to construct an alliance for health-insurance reform across class and income lines.

As we learned two weeks ago, this process has now reached a critical point. Before Wofford won in Pennsylvania, the White House had planned to postpone a showdown on health insurance until after next November by making a few token gestures. Health Secretary Louis Sullivan's recent proposal for a uniform insurance card was one. The Republican Senate bill, which would throw a few dollars at poor people ineligible for Medicaid, is another.

Now the ground rules are changed. We may not see a national health plan enacted before 1993, but we will see a national debate on the issue. The prospects for a genuine change in the way health

care is provided seemed dim only a few weeks ago. Now there is a good chance of enacting a national health-insurance plan that would meet the needs of the poor—by providing universal coverage—and of middle-income Americans. This will save billions of dollars a year in health-insurance costs to workers and employers.

The key to a plan that would reach this goal is to provide for a single payer of doctor and hospital bills. This would eliminate most of the 13-15 percent in administrative costs now paid on average to the 1,500 health-insurance companies. And it would save anywhere from \$67 billion to \$240 billion a year—depending on whose figures are used (see *In These Times*, Nov. 13).

There is one single-payer bill now before Congress, the Russo bill (HR 1300). Sponsored by 60 House members, the Russo bill is modeled on the Canadian health-care system and would provide universal access to health care through a single, publicly administered program. It would offer comprehensive benefits, including hospital and physician care, dental services, prescription drugs, mental-health services and preventive care—without cost-sharing, deductibles or co-payments. And it would allow freedom of choice of doctors and hospitals.

Financed through progressive health-insurance taxes, the Russo plan would save at least \$40 billion a year by substituting a single, uniform contract for the blizzard of paperwork, marketing, advertising and other costs now caused by private insurance industry bureaucracies.

Unfortunately, congressional Democrats are far from united on the Russo bill. The major alternative to Russo's plan is a Senate bill (S 1227), sponsored by Majority Leader George Mitchell and Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA). This bill, dubbed "pay or play," would require virtually all employers to provide health insurance or pay a tax to fund "AmeriCare" coverage. It would set up a Federal Health Expenditure Board, appointed by the president, to set national goals for health spending and to negotiate prices. Its virtue is that coverage would be extended to workers not now covered. But this legislation would leave the health-insurance industry untouched. At best, it would save only a fraction of the money saved under the Russo plan, while placing a heavy burden on small businesses.

The Mitchell-Kennedy bill is the insurance industry's attempt to survive at the expense of the American people. And the insurance industry is awesomely powerful. It has poured more money into the coffers of congressional candidates than any other industry, and it is highly skilled at lobbying and propagandizing against "socialized" medicine. Even so, the groundswell for national health insurance will be difficult to subdue. The more public debate there is on the issue, the more likely is the success of the Russo bill or a similar single-payer plan.

LETTERS

Ego fallout

JOEL BLEIFUSS IS WELCOME TO HIS OPINION about Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) crusader Hugh Kaufman ("The First Stone," Nov. 6), but embattled communities across the country who've been fighting radioactive waste dumping tend to have a very different opinion.

At first, our movement welcomed Kaufman, but we found out, after one shocking display after another, that his insufferable ego would never allow him to contribute anything but destruction and dissension. Anyone who questions Kaufman's tactics is immediately subjected to personal abuse and legal threats.

When the Nebraska dump-fighters kicked him out of that state for good in August 1990, the Omaha *World-Herald* editorialized: "Nebraskans have seen another side of Kaufman. He has brought a mean, confrontational style to the campaign.... At times he has threatened to sue meeting moderators who declined to let him have the floor for as long as he wanted it."

In California, where the nuclear industry has selected its leading site for the present generation of reactor wastes, a staffer at one of the nation's most admired environmental publications told me this summer that all he'd been able to do is put out the policy equivalent of gasoline fires set by Kaufman.

Those of us who are opposing the dumping of the most deadly wastes created by any industrial civilization will largely applaud EPA Administrator William Reilly if he can chain Kaufman to the floor of his office.

Kemp Houck
Editor, *Atoms & Waste*

Words

FOLLOWING THE EXCHANGE OF LETTERS (OCT. 30) between Alfred J. Kutzik and Dan Lazare, it's perhaps time to clear up a matter of abused semantics and mixed metaphors that have found common use today. Both writers struggle trying to amalgamate the terms "Jews" and "anti-Semitic" in their discourse, but they leave the reader puzzled and dissatisfied.

This is a good example of how word selection can be used to shape ideas, offend sensibilities and even inflame passions. The fact that the alternate words "Semite" and "anti-Jew" never appear in *In These Times* and that all Jews are not Semites and all Semites are not Jews provides some insight into how words shape world-views. The term "Semite" is archaic in the current setting. Its use distorts reality and paves the way toward propaganda.

Few Jews are Semites, and only a very few Semites are Jews. "Anti-Semitism" should be dispatched to the dust-bin of unsynonymic grammar.

Gene Kasmar
Minneapolis

An open letter to Magic Johnson

BY NOW I'M SURE YOU'VE HEARD FROM THOUSANDS of people responding to your announcement that you have tested HIV-positive—fans sending their love and support, people with various causes they'd like you



to help promote, all sorts of types both good and bad. You've become a national symbol now, and that can't be easy.

First, let me say how much I admire your courage and class. It's sad that it should have to be an act of courage to make the announcement you did, but it is. You have already helped to save untold numbers of lives, which is more than can be said for the prominent local baseball figure who's still denying that his son died from AIDS complications earlier this year.

Being a journalist, I know how hardened reporters can be. Watching a wisecracking cynic such as Keith Olberman on Channel 2 fighting back tears as he reported from your press conference made it clear that he and the others meant every word they said about what a truly good and decent human being you are. I know you mean it when you say that you want to be a spokesman and do what you can to fight this epidemic.

It will be the hardest thing you've ever done. Everyone on the planet with their pet cause or their pet angle will want you to push their particular agenda, and they'll criticize you bitterly if you don't.

You've spoken already about safe sex, and nothing I can say can convey how important that is. Even in the gay community, which was hit first and hardest by this disease, some of us are still in denial, acting as if we are somehow immune. The situation among heterosexuals is even worse, and, by all indications, it is as bad or worse in the African-American community than it is in the rest of society. People will listen to you who won't listen to anybody else.

At your press conference, a doctor from UCLA spoke optimistically about all of the wonderful new AIDS drugs that are now available. I wish the news were as good as she made it sound. There are exactly three anti-HIV drugs now in widespread use: AZT, which has been around for five years; ddI, which

was just approved by the Food and Drug Administration; and ddC, which is expected to be approved shortly. All work by essentially the same mechanism and all are very limited in their effectiveness. If your immune system gets damaged so badly that you are in serious danger of being stricken by opportunistic infections, there are a number of medications you can take to make the onset of at least some of those illnesses less likely.

That's it. The sad truth is that none of these is more than a stopgap; none can do anything more than buy you a little more time—maybe months, maybe a year, maybe a couple of years, if you're lucky. Nothing resembling a cure is even remotely on the horizon. The odds are pretty overwhelming that if medical research doesn't progress a whole lot faster in the next 10 years than it did in the last 10, you will die from AIDS, and so will several hundred thousand other Americans.

Magic, I have on my desk a document you should read. It's called "America Living With AIDS," the report of the National Commission on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. In many ways, it is strikingly similar to the report of the first national AIDS commission, issued in 1988 and immediately put on a shelf to gather dust. From everything the Bush administration said in September, when the new report was issued, it looks like this one is going to meet the same fate.

The AIDS Commission report contains 30 recommendations for government action. It recommends that the government develop a national strategy for dealing with this epidemic, that a comprehensive national HIV prevention initiative be undertaken, that present congressional restrictions on funding for HIV education and prevention be removed, that the FDA move to speed access to promising new treatments, that drug abuse treatment programs be expanded and that health care be made available to all.

It's not a perfect document, but it's a good

one. If it were fully and aggressively implemented, it could save tens of thousands of lives, maybe hundreds of thousands of lives. Maybe your life.

Magic, you have the attention of the nation focused on this epidemic in a way that no one, not even Rock Hudson, has ever been able to do. Even President Bush, who has so often brushed aside criticism of his AIDS policies that it seemed nothing could reach him, stopped and took notice when you made your announcement.

Magic, you can do more to stop this horrible epidemic than anyone on the planet. Go to Washington. Go to the White House. Tell the president that you need to talk to him about HIV and AIDS—right now he wouldn't dare turn you down. And when you're there, with the cameras rolling and the whole world watching, ask George Bush when he's going to implement that AIDS Commission's report. Now that Bush has offered you a job on the commission, take the appointment and run like hell. And don't let them buy your silence.

I wouldn't ask you to do this if there was any other way, but thousands of people battling this virus have begged, pleaded and demanded that government do the things that need to be done and have gotten no response. They're just ordinary folks, so no one listens to them. You're a hero.

And like all of the 2 million heroes whose lives are threatened by this awful virus, you deserve to live.

Bruce Mirken
Los Angeles

Ethnocentrism

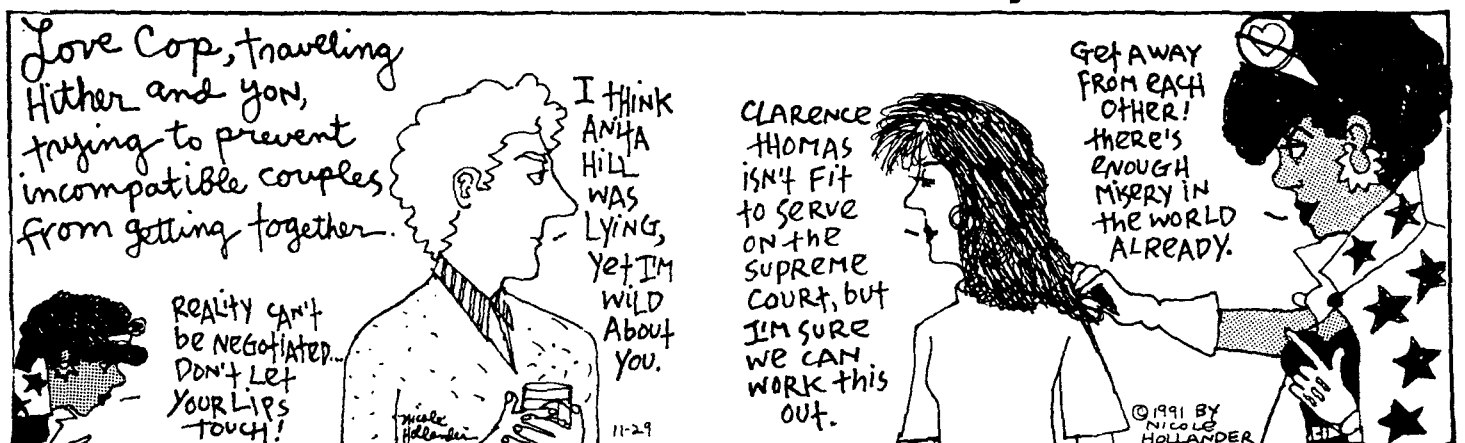
I'D LIKE OUR READERS TO KNOW THAT I HAD NOTHING to do with the bizarre headline "Sandinista senorita," that appeared over my profile of Magda Enriquez Callejas ("In Person," Nov. 6). The kindest assumption I can make about that headline is that it started life as a slugline for internal use at *ITT* and then was accidentally read by a computer as a headline during production. I can't decide if it's ethnocentric and condescending or just dumb, but, in any case, I didn't write it.

Suzanne Erfurth
Chicago

Editor's note: Sorry, it was just dumb.

Editor's note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

SYLVIA



By Christopher Lukasik

EARLY NEXT YEAR, THE RIGHT WILL HAVE the opportunity to crush any semblance of free debate in the largest source of funding for the humanities in the country. That chance will come in late January, when President Bush begins naming his next nine nominees to the National Council on the Humanities.

Since its inception in 1965, the 26-member council has helped the chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) dole out hundreds of millions of dollars in federal grants. In recent years, the council has been quietly packed with Republican cronies and conservative ideologues, despite

Iannone was an archetypal Bush nominee—underqualified, narrowly conservative in her thinking. She has no books and only a handful of essays to her credit.

a legislative mandate to the contrary. If this trend continues, freedom of expression within the council won't be the only thing to suffer. Diversity of thought in the humanities itself will be seriously threatened.

The cover was almost blown last January with the nomination of Dr. Carol Iannone to the council. Iannone was the archetypal Bush nominee—underqualified, relatively unknown and narrowly conservative in her thinking. A non-tenured adjunct professor of English at New York University's Gallatin Division, she has no books and only a handful of essays to her credit after more than 20 years of teaching. Her articles have appeared in such conservative redoubts as *Commentary* magazine, and her only post of prominence is her vice-presidency in the National Association of Scholars, a newly formed group of academics dedicated to battling the dreaded warlords of "political correctness" on campus.

Historically, nominations to the council have breezed through the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources. But the Iannone nomination touched off a media war.

The first salvo was fired in March when

Humanities Council tilting dangerously to the right

the Modern Language Association, an organization of 29,000 scholars, questioned Iannone's qualifications. Contending that she was a faculty member of "junior standing" and "slim scholarly production," the MLA pointed out that, by law, council members should have "established records of distinguished service and scholarship." By these standards, the MLA contended, Iannone was too little too soon.

The MLA was by no means alone in its opposition. Among the other scholarly groups that raised their voices in protest were the 425,000-member Phi Beta Kappa, the 12,000-member College Art Association, the 9,000-member Organization of American Historians, the 4,000-member American Studies Association, the 2,500-member writers' group PEN and the American Council of Learned Societies, an umbrella group of 46 humanities organizations.

Packing the board: Right-wing press stormed to Iannone's defense. Their strategy was simple: find the biggest mouth and shut it. In this case, the scapegoat was the MLA. Dubbing the group the "mother lode of political correctness," nationally syndicated columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak accused the MLA of leading a witch hunt against Iannone reminiscent of the McCarthy era. After all, the *Wall Street Journal* sniffed, hadn't Iannone written critically of the MLA in the past? *Newsweek's* George Will nervously prophesied "social disintegration" if the MLA succeeded and Iannone was rejected. As the carpet bombing continued, the issue of credentials was obliterated. And while the president's press operatives filibustered, top Bush administration officials such as Chief of Staff John Sununu and Vice President Dan Quayle were busily twisting arms behind the scenes.

Roused from their legislative naps, Senate Democrats managed to snuff out the nomination with a 9-to-8 vote that closely followed party lines. Committee Chairman Edward Kennedy (D-MA) claimed that "ideology was not an issue," but Iannone was widely quoted as saying that her politics, not her credentials, were the main topic of the senators' inquiries. Iannone's comment was the final word in a media blitzkrieg that

left most Americans believing that the left had somehow triumphed.

But a close look at the last two rounds of nominations reveals that the Iannone debacle was a rare setback in an otherwise successful campaign of a radically different ideological bent. A standout among the 1990 appointments is Bruce Benson, an oil company president and head of the Colorado Republican Party. An expert on distributing funds, Benson donated \$65,000 to Republican causes between 1983 and 1988, according to records provided by the Federal Election Commission. Benson's wife chipped in another \$16,750 during the same time period.

Many of Benson's 1990 cohorts share his enthusiasm for Republican causes. Donations in 1989 and 1990 by Philadelphia socialite Margaret Duckett to the National Republican Senatorial Committee and Inner Circle Inc., a Republican fund, came to more than \$2,500. Helen Crawford, a New Orleans oil and investment consultant, and husband Frank contributed a total of \$3,000 between 1983 and 1988. Peter Shaw, a professor of humanities at St. Peter's College, is a member of the same conservative scholarly group as Iannone.

The list of 1988 appointees reveals more of the same. Michael T. Bass, president of a Pensacola, Fla.-based management con-

By law, the council must provide "comprehensive representation of the views of scholars...in the humanities." But obeying the law isn't high on the council's priority list.

sulting company, was a Republican alderman for 12 years. Dr. Hillel Fradkin is vice president for programs for the Bradley Foundation, a Milwaukee-based foundation that heavily funds conservative think tanks along with more traditional charities. Among the former Reaganites to receive grants from the foundation are Eliot Abrams, Terry Eastland and William Bradford Reynolds. Edwin Delattre sits on the board of advisers of the same National Association of Scholars that includes Iannone and Shaw. Former Texas oil baron William Wright did his share, contributing \$2,500 to Republican causes in 1984 and 1988.

But wait, there's more. Even as Iannone was being turned away, Harvey Mansfield and Michael Malbin were being ushered in. Mansfield, a professor of government at Harvard, won notoriety in 1986 for his vitriolic attacks on a proposed women's studies program. Malbin, a professor of political science at State University of New York-Albany, was a speech writer for Defense Secretary Dick Cheney.

So what's new? So why should we care? After all, isn't it a grand American tradition for the reigning political party to pack every available government post with a friend, relative or pet? Not in the case of the National

Council on the Humanities. By law, the council must provide "comprehensive representation of the views of scholars and professional practitioners in the humanities."

But obeying the law doesn't seem to rank high on the priority list for Lynne Cheney, wife of the defense secretary and chairman of the council since 1986. It was Cheney who ushered in the last two crops of appointments, and it was during Cheney's tenure that the only two nominees in the history of the NEH were rejected. Before Iannone, there was Charles Moser, a Slavic languages professor from George Washington University. Moser's involvement in a textbook censorship campaign reportedly killed his nomination to the council in 1987.

After Iannone's demise, Cheney was quoted as saying, "Her nomination has raised vital First Amendment issues, and this vote will be widely seen as sanctioning limits on free expression." An ironic statement from a person who seems hellbent on purging the humanities of any non-traditional thought.

Currently, a debate is raging over the direction the humanities should take. One side is seeking to preserve a cultural aesthetic based strictly on the European model, while the other sees in that aesthetic an ideology that silences multicultural voices. With the decline in private-sector grants in recent years, the NEH has emerged as the primary source of funding for that debate.

Given the political imbalance on the council, Cheney has the power to create a virtual dictatorship of thought in the humanities. Some believe that she already has. In his June 11 *Philadelphia Inquirer* article, Stephan Salisbury cites critics of Cheney who contend that she has "torpedoed several splashy projects solely for political reasons." One such project was "1492—Clash of Visions," a proposed miniseries presenting multiple views on the Columbus expedition. The NEH peer panel and a host of eminent historians lauded the project, yet Cheney and the council refused to fund it. Another miniseries, written and narrated by leftist novelist and Mexican diplomat Carlos Fuentes, was reportedly "turned down at the highest level," despite "glowing recommendations" from the peer review panelists, historian Peggy Liss was quoted as saying in the *Inquirer* piece. As a result of this growing bias, an increasing number of humanities professors are refusing to sit on NEH peer review panels and many of the university faculty members interviewed for this article refused to be identified for fear of their own NEH grant requests being denied.

Each appointment to the council serves a six-year term, so each wave of appointments has a long-term impact. With the 10 new nominations, the right has the opportunity to gain a stranglehold on the council. Then again, the Senate could finally assert itself and insist upon the comprehensive representation of views that the law demands. What's at stake is close to \$200 million in grants annually—and the way in which we perceive ourselves as Americans. "Cheney fails to understand that if we refuse to hear our contending voices," says Dr. Mae Henderson, a professor of English at the University of Illinois at Chicago, "we risk listening only to our own echoes." ■

Christopher Lukasik is the assistant editor of *Fra Noi*, a Chicago-area Italian-American newspaper.

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By Robert A. Butterfield

Restoring socialism? Try divine intervention

ROBERT ROSS HAS OFFERED US A PERCEPTIVE analysis of the problem of reviving socialism and countering the power of capital (*ITT*, Oct. 23).

In his view, the socialist movement stands face to face with a three-headed monster: 1) the internationalization of production capital, 2) the political dominance of conservative regimes in the larger capitalist economies, and 3) the spiritual exhaustion of the socialist project. Although Ross recommends something in the way of countermeasures for each of these crises, it is unclear to me how the readers of this newspaper could actually have an impact on either of the first two. The spiritual crisis is something different. That seems to lie within our radius of operation.

When we attempt to deal with the spiritual crisis of the socialist movement, however, we immediately run into the following obstacle: socialism cannot be revived in the U.S. unless it becomes the subject of serious public discussion. But in the current political climate, few candidates for elective office can so much as use the word socialism without abruptly terminating his or her political career. Like it or not, socialism is in such ill repute that clever strategies and elaborate euphemisms must be devised to enable political candidates to discuss socialism without actually using the word.

One reason that socialism cannot be discussed publicly in the U.S. is, of course, that for the last 150 years the full propaganda powers of the government, the press and the school system have been directed against socialism as allegedly un-American. Another reason is that there have been no attractive examples of successful socialist societies that might give the lie to such propaganda. In fact, the term "socialist" has become associated in the public mind with totalitarian regimes or with eccentric and awkward attempts at social engineering.

Powerful forces have long been at work to predispose voters against anything that smacks of socialism and, in fact, against anything critical of capitalism. Therefore, our task in reviving socialism calls for a good deal of indirection and subtlety. But in what would such indirection and subtlety consist? Could one, for example, advocate socialist ideas by changing their label? No, that wouldn't work. The right specializes in unmasking such subterfuge. The only effect would be to render socialism even more dubious and unacceptable than it already is.

Looking elsewhere: The solution must lie in a totally different direction. What might happen if the American electorate came to understand that modern socialist thinkers have borrowed heavily from ancient and unimpeachable sources that are cherished and revered by vast numbers of people? The credibility of socialist thought would surely be immeasurably enhanced, perhaps to the point that a political candidate could be overtly socialist and still have a chance of getting elected.

Oddly enough, it is true that socialist thinkers are not very original. They have actually borrowed and adapted from some ancient and unimpeachable sources. Those sources are none other than the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) and its companion volume, the New Testament. A fair reading

of either of these collections would indicate that they are, for lack of a better word, socialist in outlook. This fact would mean little or nothing if these were collections of secular literature. But it so happens that Jews and Christians consider one or both of these collections to contain the inspired and authoritative word of God (as mediated by human writers).

The point is that a collection of secular literature that happened to be socialist would be dismissed by the American electorate as trash and relegated to the same oblivion as the rest of socialist thought, but I do not hear anyone talking about doing that to the Bible. Hence you do not have to be a rocket scientist or spin doctor to figure out that modern socialists should get busy and trace their intellectual and spiritual roots to the Bible. If such a campaign were led by Jesse Jackson, its slogan might be, "Let your fingers do the walking and let God do the talking." What we would discover in taking that approach is that much of what we might want to tell the American people about the value and purpose of human life, the organization of society and the relationship between humans and the rest of nature was said first and better by the God of Israel. That it would help our argument to credit God for these ideas rather than, say, Marx is obvious. Moreover, intellectual honesty requires us to credit God. Perhaps a few well-chosen examples of what the Bible has to say would be useful.

God, the socialist: The Hebrew Bible begins with a story of creation (Genesis 1:1-2:4a). In that story the process of creation remains quite mysterious and unknowable, while the emphasis is instead on the character of that which is created and on various basic relationships. Plants and animals, created in immense diversity and before human beings, have a life of their own, i.e., integrity and independence apart from humans. Humans are created so that as a species we are benevolent, curious and intelligent creatures having responsibility for graciously overseeing the plants and especially the animals, for treating each other as fellow royalty, and for remaining in intimate conversation with God the creator.

Scholars now understand this text to imply that God has created us not only to be stewards of and researchers into the created world but also to maintain just and egalitarian relationships among humans, since as a species—not as individuals—we have dominion (i.e., are kings) over the created world, and since in Israel the specific responsibility of the king is to do justice. Hence, according to this very important text, which stands at the head of the entire collection, there is no justification for any social or economic inequalities among us, and there is every reason for complete co-equality of the sexes and of all humans. A key term in this text is "dominion," which implies not only that we are all kings/queens but that no one may lord it over anyone else.

At a certain point in the biblical narrative, God grows weary of looking for individuals



to carry out the responsibilities outlined above and decides instead to create a nation of people whose special role will be to act out and demonstrate on the national level what God's will and intentions are for human life. That nation is, of course, Israel. And Leviticus is the book that most insightfully describes what the life of Israelite society is to be. Leviticus makes a very complex and beautiful statement on this subject, too complex to be dealt with satisfactorily here, but central to its vision is that the material benefits and blessings that Israel enjoys all belong to God, who allows Israel to use them but not own them.

It is understood as an offense against God the creator, and hence real owner of everything, if an Israelite claims to own anything or deprives anyone of the material benefits and blessings that God intends for the whole nation of Israel to enjoy. In other words, Leviticus opposes private ownership and capital accumulation.

Deuteronomy, which follows Leviticus, says much the same thing but in greater detail, specifying that the land should not

A fair reading of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament would indicate that they are, for lack of a better word, socialist in outlook.

be subject to commercial exploitation and that God does not intend for anyone to be poor or unprotected or to lack what is necessary for a dignified and decent life.

Whether or to what extent Israel ever put such social visions into practice is not important. The point is that Christians and Jews profess to believe that this is God's will and intention for human life. Therefore, we are not wasting our time at all in grounding modern socialist ideas in the Bible or in calling Christians and Jews to be faithful to the biblical vision.

For Jews who are not entirely ignorant of their own literature, all this should be obvious. But for Christians, the situation may be somewhat different for the following

reasons:

1) Most Christians are Roman Catholic, but it is only since Vatican II that Roman Catholics have seriously studied the Bible.

2) God's vision for human life is found mainly in the Old Testament's legal materials, which Christians seldom read.

3) This vision is also to be found in the work of the 8th-century (B.C.) prophets, but Christians have tended to give these books a privatized and spiritualized reading rather than the social and materialist reading they deserve. And American Christians have simply not been able to deal honestly with the violently anti-capitalist perspective of the prophets.

4) Since the 1830s, when American churches lost their status as state churches, they have been struggling for survival, have had comparatively little social power and have felt too weak to oppose the powerful capitalist tendencies of American society. As a result, American Christians are generally in need of a thorough re-education in their sacred literature. This statement holds true for the New Testament as well as for the Old. For example, most American Christians have not been told and do not realize that the movement that arose around Jesus of Nazareth was a self-help movement of poor Jews who had lost their land or their jobs, had become homeless and had, in a variety of other ways, been oppressed by the Roman Empire in collusion with Palestine's ruling elite.

These poor Jews protested by rejecting the highly stratified and patriarchal structures of Israelite society, by renouncing all efforts to accumulate worldly goods and by embracing a lifestyle based on the values of simplicity and solidarity. Jesus himself adopted this way of life and became a wanderer without home, family or possessions and with no job except that of proclaiming the advent of a new order, which, by the way, bears a striking resemblance to the order predicted and longed for by the 8th-century prophets.

New Testament scholars are well aware of all this, but word of it rarely reaches the average American Christian. Part of the reason is that many American Christians have been so shaped and affected by the propaganda of the dominant class that they cannot bear to listen to anything that runs counter to the prevailing capitalist currents of American society. And part of the reason is that the churches and synagogues, worried about their own survival in a highly secularized society, have not been eager to tell their own members what they know their members do not want to hear. Thus, strange as it may seem, many American Christians and Jews have read the Bible but do not know what it is actually about. What can be done?

I suggest that socialists study the Bible, especially the Torah (Pentateuch) and the 8th-century prophets in the Old Testament and the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles in the New, including critical studies. Then we should begin presenting modern socialist thought as a logical outgrowth of the Bible. At the same time, we should pressure and encourage the churches and synagogues to be faithful to their own sacred literature and to their own God, who I know is a socialist.

Robert A. Butterfield is a biblical scholar living in Oak Park, Ill.

By Char Miller

LAST SPRING, ONE OF MY STUDENTS, loitering near my office, overheard a telephone conversation I was having with a friend in the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). As with previous phone calls, this one had been focused on the confusion, even demoralization, of the service as its members sought to come to terms with the sharp challenges to its procedures from

ENVIRONMENT

the political right and left. No sooner had I set receiver into cradle than the student was at my door. "We need to talk," she declared. "How much time do you have?" It was then that I knew I was in trouble.

Her father, it turned out, had worked for the USFS in the Pacific Northwest, Region Six, for more than 35 years, and she had been working in its public affairs offices for the past three summers. She spoke affectionately about what it was like to grow up within the service and less happily about a forester's professional and emotional frustrations. As she was leaving, moreover, she indicated that she would not, could not, follow in her father's footsteps.

A wooden box: I was somewhat surprised by this revelation, not only because of her evident respect for the organization but also because throughout the conversation she had spoken of the Forest Service in the first-person plural: we. That linguistic link notwithstanding, she wouldn't sign on, once she had graduated. "We're boxed in," she lamented. "The environmentalists shout that we're sleeping with the wood products industry." (Don't worry. She's a college student. They talk like that.) "The lumber people are just as convinced that we're shacking up with the tree huggers." She paused. "We can't win. The Forest Service is no place to be an idealist anymore." With that, she slung her backpack over her shoulder, slipped out the door and headed



Gifford Pinchot understood that professional foresters must evolve if they are to survive.

Pulp fiction and ripping yarns from the U.S. Forest Service

down the hall.

I was baffled by the rapidity of her departure, but recognized that her pain and frustration all too clearly confirmed the tenor of my earlier telephone conversation: The Forest Service was in a bad way.

But is this simply because, as many service personnel would have it, they are caught in a cross fire between environmentalists and the lumber industry? Not entirely. One need look no further than John

Mammu's "resignation" as regional forester of Region One, amply reported in *In These Times* (Oct. 16), to know that the USFS' internal policies lie at the heart of the matter. Its urgent drive to fulfill artificially high annual harvests, for instance, has driven a wedge into its once-hallowed sense of mission, splintering its organizational integrity in the process.

Comes a cropper: To repair these wounds will not be easy—if,

in fact, they should be repaired at all. After all, if the USFS' future is up for debate then so is its institutional demise. And there is good reason to wonder whether the National Forests under its control might not be better placed under the aegis of the Interior Department. There is a historical precedent for this suggestion—that's where the forests were located before the USFS was created in 1905—as well as an environmental logic: these well-wooded acres would remain that way in an agency that did not consider trees a crop.

But assuming that the Forest Service is not about to be dismantled, then how are its perspectives to be

The Forest Service's current problems stem from the fact that it has ignored its roots.

changed? Must it break sharply with its past, as so many of its critics demand, to ensure a greener future for the American landscape? Quite the contrary: Its current problems stem from the fact that it has turned away from its past, that it has ignored its

roots.

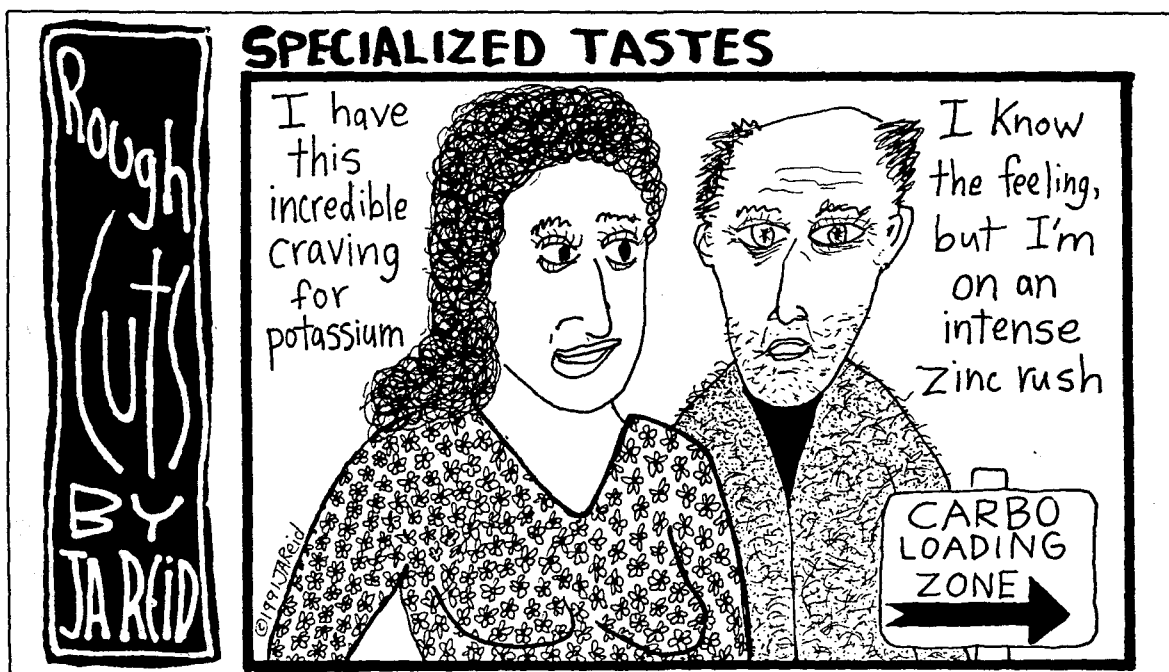
Make that its tap root, its first chief, Gifford Pinchot. No, not the Pinchot whose mask the Forest Service occasionally pulls out to cover up some public relations gaffe or policy blunder, as if a good, clean and handsome face could distract attention from the ugly reality of a gutted forest. But rather the Pinchot who understood far better than his successors have that professional foresters, like the forests they study, must learn to evolve if they are to survive.

The long haul: His evolution was remarkable, too. Raised in a household in which the family's lumbering interests paid some of the bills, he undertook graduate study in forestry in France, where he learned that only selective harvesting—not the clear-cutting that his grandfather had favored—made scientific sense. This restraint, this notion of wise use, of conservation, would take on a political dimension when, early in the 20th century, Theodore Roosevelt selected Pinchot to head the fledgling U.S. Forest Service. He joined with other federal scientists to expand the range of the government's control over natural resources so that their exploitation could be better regulated and their existence maintained over time. His credo became a kind of utilitarian war cry: "the greatest good for the greatest number over the longest period of time."

That made for good politics, of course. But it also offered Pinchot a means to evolve, for what would happen if the definition of what constituted "the greatest good" changed? He answered that when, beginning in the '20s, a decade after he had been fired by Taft, he began to attack the Forest Service's mismanagement of the National Forests and challenge its increasingly cozy relationship with the lumber industry. His remedy, especially championed during the Great Depression, was twofold: a public buyout of private timber land, and thus of industry, and the application of "forest ecology" to that land's management, whereby the need to maintain a "balance of nature," not the lure of profits, determined the cutting of trees. The Republican had gone socialist; the forester had turned a brighter shade of green.

Having trouble imagining the current leadership of the USFS making this kind of radical journey? So do I. But then, stranger things have happened, as Pinchot's career reveals. Indeed, the benefits of hiking down the trail he blazed a half-century ago are many, not the least of which would be that the Forest Service would become once again a healthy milieu for idealists. Now that would be strange.

Char Miller teaches history at Trinity University and is writing a biography of Gifford Pinchot for Basic Books.



Updike's domestic horror show runs on empty all the way home

Rabbit Run (1960), **Rabbit Redux** (1971), **Rabbit is Rich** (1981) & **Rabbit at Rest** (1990)
By John Updike
All Alfred A. Knopf

By Matthew Wills

IN HIS FOUR RABBIT BOOKS, JOHN UPDIKE has created an epic of post-war American domesticity. This is love, American-style, and it's scarier than any gorefest from Stephen King or Clive Barker. From the '50s era of commies under the bed to our own day of viruses in the bed, the Rabbits ironically milestone the best years of our lives in decadeterminating chronicles of the changing seasons of sex, economy, race and even geography; there's an awful lot to be had here in 1,700 pages.

Read serially, as one huge novel, the four books coalesce into an emotional canvas, a canvas gaping with rents from the little tears of desire, infidelity, age and death, always death, all the heated density of stuff that makes up those "traditional family values" we know so intimately. The personal is ever political, and the home, the bed, is that most political of places, making Washington look like a nest of rank amateurs.

No way out: In the beginning, Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom runs away from home. A classic American move, that, lighting out for the territories and leaving all your troubles behind in one version of the "old world" or another. Only Rabbit can't really get away, even though he tries several times, abandoning his drunkard pregnant wife, Janice, and then coming back, and back. Not particularly likeable until well into middle age, and then only partially, Rabbit is nevertheless easy to empathize with.

He's not a monster, just a big, pale, frustrated Leatherstocking, a perpetually horny ex-jock living on the transient glory of high school. An all-American boy, in short, glorious at 18 and then all downhill from there. He's pettily cruel, wildly insensitive, lazily bigoted and lives in Brewer, Pa., a town crumbling in the gagging smoke of the rust belt. It's no surprise that his first adult job, demonstrating a household gadget during Ike's reign of containment, stinks.

Rabbit's inability to get away—and he tries again in the final novel—is more than just his problem, though. There are simply no more territories to strike out into, regardless of New Frontiers or New World Orders. That we have come to the end of a certain road in America, the road of the dreamy,

creamy high-carbohydrate life, is not news, yet Updike traces its last windings with a nicely styled, elegiac irony. This is the way it is, he says, God or something help us all. Nostalgia and sentiment are inescapable, of course, and these are the books that we will want read when future historians start looking at the decline and fall of the American empire.

Rabbit has to keep coming home. What frontier is there, besides

FICTION

Florida, where some better off people go to die, and the Moon, which lights the late '60s psychedelia of *Rabbit Redux*? There's only the inner territory of the family, a landscape made grotesque by innumerable repressions and sitcoms. There's too much emotional baggage for escape from that, and Rabbit is not of a therapeutic-friendly generation used to "processing" the baggage. He just carries it around with him, pretending it's not there, waiting for some *deus ex machina* laxative to flush him clean. Sorry, Charlie, but you've got to work it out.

Some of that baggage delivers Rabbit from working with his hands for a living. Representative of a craft, his father's trade, Rabbit sets type during the '60s until he gets laid off under the evil sign of Nixon the trickster; notions of the dignity of work get superseded by the boredom and benumbing repetition of labor, not to mention the death throes of industrial decline. But after labor comes the service economy: the end of Rabbit's rainbow is Janice's family's Toyota dealership. Arab oil and Japanese cars make Rabbit rich, a little irony for this red, white and blue American boy who regrets

Read serially, the Rabbit books coalesce into a huge emotional canvas with rents from the little tears of desire, infidelity, age and death.

being too old to fight in Vietnam. Rich at last, but happy?

Ho, ho, hardly. Nelson, Rabbit's son, grows up to be a whinny coke-head, another domestic disaster, who, sent to detox, reforms and returns as a goody-two-shoes, an equally obnoxious 12-step religious

whiner. The point is that he has every reason to be a whiner and to love-hate his lousy father. Janice, maligned for years, finally strikes out on her own—in real estate. Where else? And Rabbit collapses on a concrete basketball court, trying to hot-shot a young African-American kid. Rabbit comes to his rest in Florida, dying of cruddy arteries, his heart fattened by the junk that the good life of running on empty piles within easy reach. He can stop running at last, hallelujah. Oh, what a lucky man.

An American epic: Updike's updated, better-than-original formula of the Three Ages runs like this: in adolescence, sex, money and death are the three dominant preoccupations, in that order. In middle age, it's money, sex, death. In old age, death, money, sex. Throw in race and you have all the obsessions of Rabbit and, by extension, this nation. Sex is the big, open secret. Money is the hollow achievement success is measured by and the basis for the stealth class war that rages across the land. Death is death, to be cheated momentarily and to be ashamed of in a youth-oriented culture.

Race is the wringer, of course, our nation's constantly erupting sore: the lurid, drug-loopy weirdness of *Rabbit Redux* hovers around Skeeter, a black 'Nam vet who brings race consciousness into Rabbit's house (or is it his home?) as Apollo 11 deposits some white guys on the dust of the Moon. Rabbit learns something of the precious commodity of ambiguity from Skeeter, and then his home (or is it just his house?), already much splintered, is burned down by neighbors who don't want any blacks in their area.

Rabbit Redux is the only book where race is in your face—those '60s, you know—but the repressed continues to return. Years later, in *Rabbit is Rich*, Skeeter dies off-stage in a MOVE-like fire-fight with the Philadelphia cops. Meanwhile, Rabbit and Janice make love on a bed of Krugerrands they take to a bank scrawled with the graffiti "Skeeter Lives."

It's too much to call the Rabbit quartet a tragedy, or a farce. What it is is the story we tell ourselves, about our families, within the context of culture and politics we call America. That's why it's an epic, not of the classical sort, of course, but of the contemporary kind. Our story—gossip, soap opera even—shared and recognizable, of the nation's bedroom transcendent. ■

Matthew Wills is a writer living in Iowa City.



Black Robe

Directed by Bruce Beresford

By Pat Aufderheide

T'LL BE OK. SOMEDAY THE QUINCENTENARY of Columbus' arrival in the Western Hemisphere will be behind us. It may seem early to start counting, since 1992 has not officially begun. But with movies like *Black Robe* riding on the wind of encounter hype, it's none too soon to fix your eyes on the horizon.

The horizon is where all the beauty shots are in *Black Robe*, the stilted epic directed by Bruce Beresford. In this tale of a 17th-century Jesuit's journey (with bearers) through wilderness to a mission among the Hurons, the scenery takes pride of place. And that's no small thing; the majestic bluffs, autumnal displays, snowy forest interiors, lakes that engulf those canoe slivers carrying heavy loads of passion and guilt beat your basic beer commercial to heck and back.

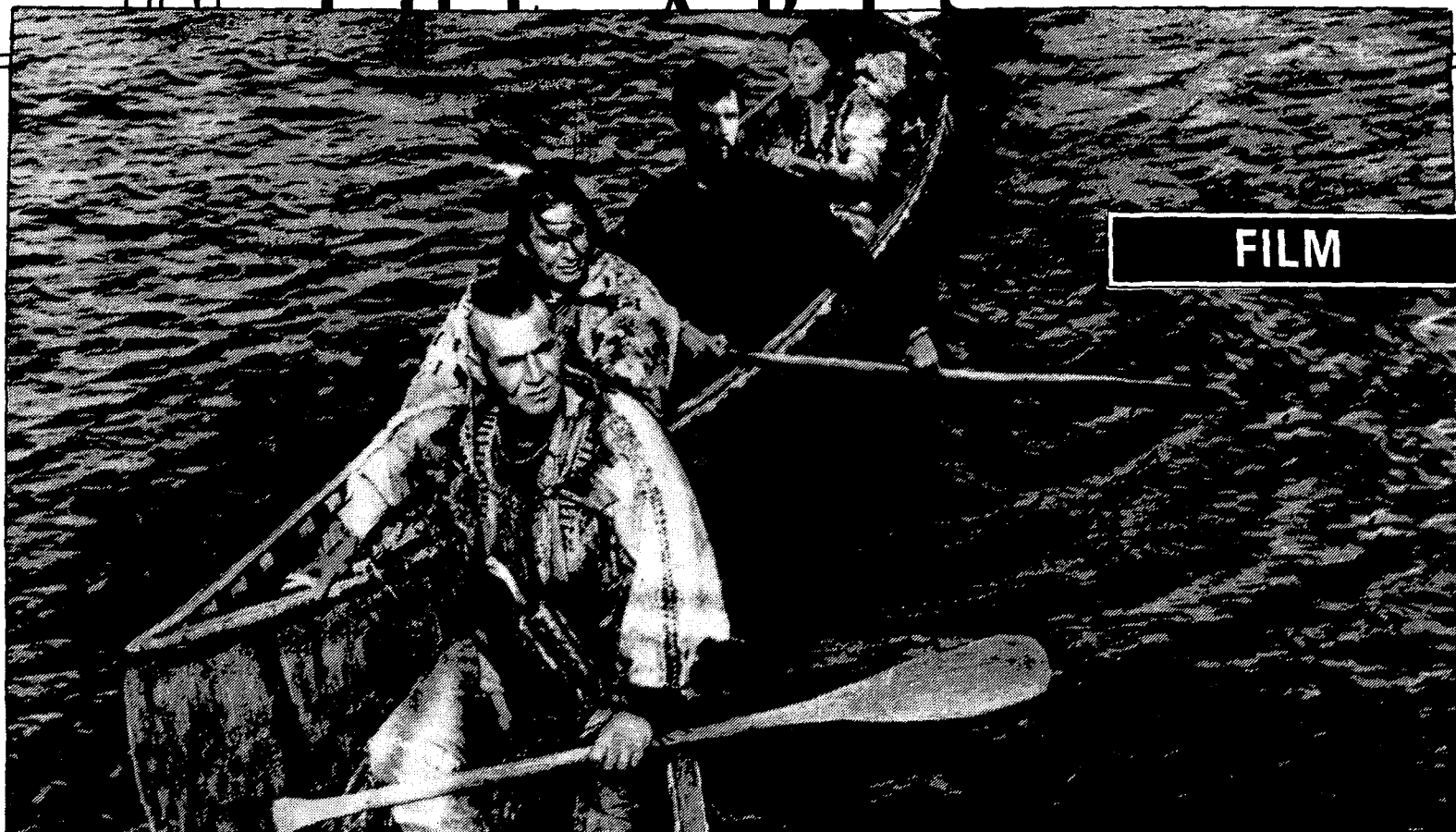
The credit for this long-form paean to Canadian off-season tourism doesn't just go to natural resources, of course. Cinematography (by Peter James, who also filmed Beresford's *Driving Miss Daisy* and *Mr. Johnson*) is calculated to dazzle, not just with nature but in breathtaking match shots (forest from above/cathedral pillars from above) that link the Jesuit's past with his present. Editing (by industry veteran Tim Wellburn) also has a razzle-dazzle edge to its competence, particularly in dream sequences.

Paddling like crazy: But somehow Beresford, building on Brian Moore's screenplay and book, managed to miss the compelling story to go with the background. A sterling cast—including Lorraine Bracco as the "Black Robe" Jesuit (he was last seen as the lead in *Jesus of Montreal*) and mostly white repertory actors who play Indians—paddles like crazy but doesn't get much of anywhere emotionally or psychologically.

Father Laforgue starts out as a nerd's nerd and keeps it up. Precise, cool, unwavering in his convictions and methods if sometimes distressed about their implications, he acts more like God's accountant than His servant. Laforgue's sidekick Daniel (Aden Young), all blue eyes and bee-stung lips, plays the flesh-is-weak side of the Europeans, romancing an Indian maiden and hanging around forlornly on the fringes of Algonquin daily life.

We never build up much emotional investment in the central issue: Will the expedition get to the Huron settlement? If anything, there's a tendency to root for the dissidents who say, "Let's kill the Black Robe and go hunting."

But Sen. Ted Stevens (R-AK) can relax. (He's the one who's been worrying that a Smithsonian television series on the heritage of the encounter, a show he's never seen and,



Black Robe: paddling like crazy but not getting much of anywhere.

FILM

Red and white blues in the *Black Robe*

in fact, is unfinished, might be biased against Western Civ.) This is not a finger-pointing movie about colonialism either. The Algonquins, who are the Jesuit's expeditionary force, just come along for the trade goods ("That will be our undoing," says the chief Chomina—played by August Schellenberg—ominously).

Stupid and greedy: They run into bizarre allies, including a dwarfish shaman (Yvan Labelle), who encourage superstitious resentment. And then they run into enemies, who brutalize, murder, rape and torture with glee. When Chomina dies, as if to make sure anybody who came in halfway through gets the point, he says to his daughter, "I'm as stupid and greedy as the white man."

But not as fanatical, perhaps. Chomina may be stupid and greedy (no, no Chomina! You're a warm and sensitive human being!), but as Daniel earnestly explains in his adolescent way to Laforgue, his people "share everything without question." They also are not uptight about sex. Daniel later asks Laforgue why they need to be converted. "They are true Christians," he says. "They live for each other; they have an afterworld of their own."

(This is one of those moments where, like in the hike up the waterfall in *The Mission*, you'd like to remind the actors that they're supposed to be 17th-century believers, not late 20th-century therapists. Europeans thought that an afterworld of the Indians' own was hell.)

In the end, the Indians get points for not even having to believe, since they simply know their beliefs are reality; and also for having more plausible ones—a heaven where you just sit around admiring God was not a selling point in missionary work, apparently. The Europeans get

points for the passion of evangelism that drives them to extend their love past their own group. And both groups are tarred with that oh-too-human brush. It's enough to make you shrug and head for the concessions stand.

A saggy saga: Beresford clearly has a penchant for issues, and a grip on the sentimental or dramatic spin that turns them into entertainment. Several films he made in his native Australia before breaking into the U.S. industry had a socially critical edge. *Breaker Morant*, the film that brought him to notice here, was a film with a strong anti-imperialist flavor about an unjust court martial during the Boer War. *Tender Mercies*, about the re-creation of family on the decaying frontier, and *Driving*

It's enough to make you shrug and head for the concessions stand.

Miss Daisy both nestled class and cultural conflict issues in winsome love stories.

It's clear that here too he saw issues in this saga. Beresford says he was drawn to Moore's book because "It showed Indians in a way that was new to me. They are the main characters in the story, much more forceful and dominating than they're normally portrayed."

But screen time doesn't add up necessarily to new vision, and maybe that's where Beresford's dramatic instincts failed him. *Black Robe*'s central characters are the two white men, its driving issues and conflicts are their mission and beliefs. Even the strongest cross-cultural relationships—Laforgue's with Chomina,

Daniel's with Chomina's daughter—go to inform the central characters' conflicts.

It is the Indians whose talk is translated, not the Europeans. The filmmakers felt it would be less "phony" if Indians spoke in an Indian language, but some of the languages of the time are lost. So they speak in subtitled Cree and Mohawk, often talking about the intruders in awed and mystified tones. Meanwhile, the French speak in French-accented English, since—press release piety aside—it is their story that is intelligible to us. And, of course, mostly they talk about their own concerns.

The Indians' values, habits and customs are bizarre and exotic, from screaming-yellow facepaint to feather-and-claw headdresses to war rituals. Insofar as they are human, they are "just like you and me" human. Dad, for instance, warns daughter that her boyfriend "can't provide for you." In this long, arduous trip across country, what the Indians brought to the project—their special expertise at surviving on the land—is almost never even referenced. It's just paddle, paddle, paddle to the action.

Hungry for reality: *Black Robe*, in fact, repeats the traditional storytelling focus on the arriviste's viewpoint. It's at one with another New World entry for the encounter media sweepstakes, *Cabeza De Vaca*. That gaudy epic by Mexican Nicolas Echevarria traces the voyage of one misbegotten conquistador, inventing fabulous, Carlos Castaneda-like versions of the exotic savage for him to encounter. It's easier to critique the invader, like Werner Herzog does so hysterically in *Aguirre, Wrath of God*, than it is to imagine the contact from the residents' perspective. Even the heart-on-sleeve *Dances With Wolves* is the story of how the encounter en-

nobled the invader. At least there's always the 20-year-old film made by Brazilian Nelson Pereira dos Santos, *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman* (available from New Yorker). Now there's a story in which the Indians are the main characters. In fact, the European is dinner.

The quincentenary, for all the hand-wringing hype, does serve a useful function when controversy demonstrates how unresolved and even ill-framed the social questions of a polycultural society are. One reason the encounter is turning into such a morass is because social issues—issues about the shaping of particular societies and of shared public values—are often seen as individual ethical ones.

Richly complex and dramatic elements of that encounter disappear from sight. For instance, the Indian savagery we see in *Black Robe* was fueled by contact. The French, in order to conduct both trade and evangelism, were dragged into intertribal warfare; that warfare escalated brutally with the aid of French munitions and trade goods. The health crisis Laforgue faces when he arrives at the Huron mission was part of a pandemic of the time. Indeed, a huge Huron settlement including tens of thousands may have disappeared completely because European diseases spread like wildfire in close quarters.

But it's hard, in this version, to get a sense of the magnitude of social change, much of it inadvertent, wrought by this improbable meeting of cultures. Tracking tidy Father Laforgue's relentless march toward his mission, *Black Robe* keeps its moral and dramatic focus small, balancing ethical issues until we just don't care anymore.

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Show demonstrates how the Nazis separated masterpiece from 'master race'

Degenerate Art: The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany

S. Dillon Ripley Center, Smithsonian Institution Washington, D.C. (through Jan. 5, 1992)

By Mark G. Judge

THE ENTRANCE TO THE SMITHSONIAN Institution's "Degenerate Art: The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany" is literally a descent into the underworld. The visitor enters through a small kiosk just off the Mall, Washington, D.C.'s grassy, wide-open quad that stretches from the Capitol to the Washington Monument, marches down a circular staircase then glides down an escalator. It's a trip that elicits feelings of tumbling into Hades.

In fact, it's not hell, but close enough—a chilling facsimile of a museum in Nazi Germany stuffed

In 1937 Berlin, it looked like the muses, and the masses, would be crushed under the boot of the Nazis.

with pieces of what Hitler called "degenerate art." A large blood-red banner welcomes you to the show, which has already traveled to Los Angeles and Chicago. The way down the con-

course escalator is flanked with head shots of exiled philosophers, musicians and artists who fled the Third Reich after the rise of Hitler. Below the photographs are quotes. "The exile's trade is: hoping," says Bertolt Brecht. Across from Brecht is a confident Franz Werfel in 1942: "The side on which the muses stand is always the side of victory."

Maybe, but in 1937 Berlin it looked like the muses, not to mention the people they inspired, would be crushed under the boot of National Socialism. That year the Nazis confiscated more than 16,000 pieces from 32 museums in 28 cities and displayed 650 of the paintings, prints, sculptures and books in the *Entartete Kunst* ("Degenerate Art") exhibition in Munich. Works by everyone from Jack London to painter Otto Dix were trumpeted as vulgar, dissident garbage. Paintings were crammed together on temporary walls, which were scrawled with fascist slogans and commentary: "Decadence exploited for literary and commercial purposes"; "An insult to the German heroes of the Great War." Labels revealed how much had been paid for each work from "the taxes of the German working people." (Sen. Helms, please check with your answering service.)

Avant off-guard: Hitler possessed a sharp eye and a fascist's weakness for hokey nationalistic art (curator Stephanie Barron notes on the taped program of the tour that the fuhrer loved "folk qualities—what we would now call *kitsch*") and the "Degenerate Art" show's small introductory gallery displays gaudy and menacing propaganda art—

political posters boosting Hitler ("Our Last Hope"), heroic ads for the 1936 Olympics, and an ad for the opening of the *Entartete Kunst* exhibit, replete with vicious caricature of a Jewish face.

The Nazis despised the experimental avant-garde movements—most notably, German Expressionism and the abstract minimalism of the Bauhaus school—that flowered in the wake of World War I, and Hitler once fumed that daring artistic experiments like cubism and dadaism were "neither sound in racial terms nor tolerable in national terms."

With the enthusiastic help of Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels, Hitler opened the *Entartete Kunst* in 1937. The exhibit was mounted opposite the *Grosse Deutsche Kunstausstellung* (Great German Art Exhibition) to juxtapose the foulness of modern art with the rigid Nordic grandeur of the old. The effect, of course, was like arresting the 2 Live Crew: almost 3 million Germans lined up to have a gander at the works of "incompetents and charlatans" hanging in the *Entartete Kunst*.

In the swastika's shadow: The Smithsonian has done a remarkable job re-creating the look and feel of

the original Munich exhibit, simultaneously displaying the works of art with the dignity and respect denied them under the Nazis. A long, eye-level miniature model details the cluttered layout of the original exhibit, and the galleries leading to the "Works from *Entartete Kunst*" are divided into three categories of the arts that also froze in the shadow of the swastika: music, film and literature.

The film gallery shows clips from German directors such as Fritz Lang, G.W. Pabst and Joseph von Sternberg. Vitrines in the literature gallery protect books banned by the Nazis, and in the music gallery vulgar Nazi pamphlets advertise the music of the *Entartete Kunst*. (One particularly demented booklet derides jazz music, portraying a sax player as an apelike African-American with an earring and Star of David stuck in his lapel.) Overhead, television monitors run newsreels of book-burnings, concentration camps and clips of bewildered Germans wandering through the original exhibit.

The last and largest room, "Works from *Entartete Kunst*," elegantly displays some of the 20th century's most moving artists, painters who suffered derision by minds so muddled with misapprehension that it's

The exhibit was originally mounted to juxtapose the foulness of modern art with the Nordic grandeur of the old. The effect, of course, was like arresting the 2 Live Crew.

still hard to understand how they ever seized power. Brilliant, evocative works by artists such as Max Beckmann, Erich Heckel, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (and an obscure, emotive painter named Vincent Van Gogh) were seen by the Nazis as "crazy at any price"; religious paintings by Jewish artists showed "Insolent mockery of the Divine"; landscapes and still lifes were denounced as "Nature as seen by sick minds." And one of my favorites, Kirchner's

ART

erotic, angular *The Dancers* is condemned for being—you guessed it—obscene.

But perhaps the most salient installment of "Degenerate Art" hangs off to one side of the literature room—a 1933 *New York Times* front-page article on a recent book-burning in Berlin. "Such an exhibition of the new national spirit," the anonymous piece reads, "silly and shameful as it seems, bespeaks a mass movement plainly touched with insanity. It is not a passing freak of schoolboys."

The horror of this piece, frozen in glass like the unheard echo of a warning, is that the author's prophetic words were ignored. Anti-art rhetoric as a springboard from sophomoric defamation to death camps seemed fantasy. Within months of its writing, more books were burned, more artists shackled and vilified. Then people were put into ovens.

On my way out of the exhibit, past the remaining "degenerate" sculptures and paintings of artists sent packing from the academies by Hitler's art gestapo, the Helmsian buffoonery I'd been laughing at for weeks didn't seem so funny anymore. ■

Mark G. Judge is a writer living in Maryland.



Max Beckmann's *Still Life with Musical Instruments* is one of hundreds of pieces of art the Nazis considered "degenerate."

Candidates

Continued from page 3

nation's political system cut "the umbilical cord to corrupt money that is undermining this country, that has undermined organized labor and is eating away like a cancer at the Democratic Party." By hammering away on the control of politics—including top Democrats—by the wealthy,

Brown neglected to elaborate much of his economic strategy, which includes energy conservation, high-speed rail, industrial innovation, and public youth employment programs.

"We need a change of values so that we begin to care more about posterity than we do about popularity, more about the next generation than we do about the next election," Kerrey said, a theme echoed in

Clinton's denunciation of Reagan's and Bush's policies to "glorify the fast buck over the long haul."

All the candidates finessed the tax issue with an insistence that the savings and loan bailout and other policies demonstrate the money is available if there's political will, but Harkin hit most strongly on the need to cut defense spending.

In their own distinct fashions, Harkin and

Brown struck the most "populist" tone of attack on the establishment and defense of the little people. Clinton and Tsongas, in different ways, invoked more of the "progressive" tradition of enlightened government management. Kerrey managed to incorporate elements of both traditions, while Wilder adopted a more conventional "good government" posture of fiscal control and fairness. —D.M.

Big uneasy

Continued from page 24

Ducky and I rambled north "all aboard" the "City of New Orleans," destination Pittsburgh via Chicago. While in the Windy City, I dropped in on Studs Terkel, the legendary 80-year-old labor interviewer. He quizzed me about my efforts in the land of David Duke while lounging in his pjs and "calling for" a gin and tonic or two. I told him how hard it was to get liberal environmentalists who were used to operating in a manner anywhere from touchy-feely consensus building (as in Earth Day coalitions) to knee-jerk kamikaze adventurism (like Greenpeace) to act in concert with the cautious-to-downright suspicious, job-scared trade unionists whose tradition ranged from the ultra-democracy of the vote-on-everything Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union to the just-play-ball-or-get-bounced (now hopefully reforming) Teamsters. Studs told me how incredibly important it was to bridge that gap between workers and environmentalists because there should be no unresolvable differences in these modern times. The old sage's eyes twinkled as he leaned closer. "The more efficient and clean the industry, the less the waste and pollution. And the more productivity, pay and profits for everybody! Good business is clean business."

I nodded my agreement.

He broke my long silence. "So what's the problem?"

"Corrupt politics," I answered. "It's that Louisiana *lagniappe*—that little extra of get-over that everybody's afraid to lose in these

lean times if they buck Big Easy politics. Now a Duke and a phony Populist Prince (Democrat Edwin Edwards) are spending millions for the Kingfish's crown in Baton Rouge. Workers and environmentalists will be damned either way in the long run—yet, when faced with this mounting disaster, both camps let the election issue slide lest they upset their memberships."

"The unions and the environmental groups gotta be willing to deal with conflict openly—together with their people, to get them involved in questioning the old values," concluded Studs. "The process has to be alive and unafraid, like it was in the early days of organizing!"

Studs and I continued to dabble in third-party possibilities and other hopeful political alliances until the master scribe told me he had to return to working on his latest book—on American racism, no less.

Dust in the wind: The phone rang off the hook my first morning back in the 'Burgh. My friends' catch-up briefings were glum. The economy's still sliding, as evidenced by City Planning and Recreation pals sweating out a pink-slip epidemic. Worse yet, my environmentalist group friends were staring down the barrel of the country's biggest hazardous waste incinerator—Waste Technologies, Inc. (WTI) being constructed right on the tip of Ohio.

Just so happens that the prevailing winds will dust Ohio's own East Liverpool, West Virginia and western Pennsylvania with toxic emissions that the medical associations and most politicians of all three states heartily condemn. Now why would the Buckeye State do such a dirty deed? Is Cincinnati still

steamed over that Sohio river spill? Are the Reds that big a "Dribble" or the "Bungles" so disappointing or is Cleveland going so much to the "Dawgs" that they got to make our exalted Stanley Cup lives so much less livable?

I'm being too harsh on Ohio, I know. On the upside, I recently represented Pittsburgh's Sister Cities Organization at a state-of-the-art conference in Cincinnati on developing sister-cities relationships that can enhance a city's international perspective and standing. In this arena, the host city was clearly first division, while Pittsburgh languishes near the cellar. But, hey, now we're inspired and our timing is near perfect as the coming of the new International Airport and future World Trade Center looms bright on the horizon.

I went to that conference optimistic that nothing could get in the way of our earning the reputation as the world's cosmopolitan gateway to America's Century III prosperity. A conference debate on the environment gave me pause, however. Usually at conferences involving Soviets you don't see much open disagreement, but the Ukrainian Sister City delegates, still fuming over the Chernobyl disaster, were going for the Old Order's jugular. "Why was the public sacrificed—left in the dark?" demanded a defiant young woman doctor from Karkov. Distinguished-looking Soviet scientists and engineers defensively argued that environmental matters should remain in their professional purview, not be emotionally decided via debate with the general population.

"Hold on there," interjected a chorus of American voices—many of them businessmen—in defense of the dissident Soviet citizens. "Demonstrating the popular will is the American way!" "Don't you see? In a democracy the people have the ultimate say!" (Lec-

turing Soviets on the big "D" was a favorite participation sport at the Cincy conference.)

Naturally, we Americans carried the day in that amazing workshop debate. But I wonder if we really know which way the wind blows in our own backyard. We all know how well the big "D" is working down in *Sleaziana*. But how well is it working 30 miles from the Point, where massive citizen outcry against WTI is ignored? Where's our local labor movement on this burning environmental issue? Electing Wofford on national health care? Well, that's great, because we're going to need all the health care we can get if we light up our skies with incinerators in exchange for the *lagniappe* of a few hundred jobs.

Before we outsmart ourselves and let western Pennsylvania and Appalachia become the garbage pail of the Northeast, just like some good ol' boys went and did for the Southeast, we better raise the level of this scientific debate about the WTIs of this new world order and talk to our kids. Ask them, if they'd want to go to the East Liverpool elementary school, which stands only 1,100 feet from the incinerator's smokestack. Explain to them that part of their curriculum would be getting annual urinalysis and blood tests. I tried this on Ducky. Although he raised some fine lookin' guinea pigs down in Baton Rouge, he doesn't want to trade places.

Larry Evans is a writer living in Pittsburgh.

The Adventures of a Huge Mouth, by Peter Hannan

You know, I'd be like a
TOTAL superstar in Europe.



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22 IN THESE TIMES NOV. 20-26, 1991

C A L E N D A R

Use the Calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is \$25.00 for one insertion, \$35.00 for two insertions and \$15.00 for each additional insert, for copy of 50 words or less (additional words are 50¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement, and should be sent to the attention of ITT Calendar.

NEW YORK

November 22-December 18

THE NEW YORK MARXIST SCHOOL

Friday, Nov. 22—Pot-luck dinner (bring a dish and a friend), 6:30 p.m.; free.

Sunday, Dec. 1—Oswaldo Razo, *Fantasmas Panamenos/Panamanian Ghosts* (art opening; on view through Jan. 24), 4 p.m.; free.

Monday, Dec. 2—Luciana Castellina, 1992 and Left Politics in Europe (3-day intensive seminar), 6 p.m.; \$145 (includes public lecture, 8 p.m.; lecture only, \$8).

Tuesday, Dec. 3—Luciana Castellina, continuation of seminar on 1992 and Left Politics in Europe, 6-9:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 4—Luciana Castellina, continuation of seminar on 1992 and Left Politics in Europe, 6-9:30 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 6—Peter Kwong, *Race, Immigration and the Municipal Budget* (lecture), 7 p.m.; \$6.

Tuesday, Dec. 10—Marilyn Clement, *Organizing for Health Care: A Slide Show from Physicians for a National Health Plan* (lecture/slide show), 8 p.m.; \$6.

Friday, Dec. 13—William Kunstler, *The Rise and Fall of the Bill of Rights* (lecture), 7 p.m.; \$6.

Wednesday, Dec. 18—Pot-luck dinner (bring a dish

and a friend), 6:30 p.m.; free.

All events take place at The New York Marxist School, 79 Leonard St. (5 blocks below Canal St. between Church St. and Broadway), New York, NY 10013. Scholarships are available for low-income people. For more information, call (212) 941-0332.

November 23-24

RePackaging Paradise: Media Strategies for a New World. Media Network conference for educators, activists, media producers on mainstream and alternative media and the quinquennial. Panels, workshops, screenings. Nov. 23 and 24. New York City. Keynote: Bell Hooks. (212) 929-2663. Media Network, 39 W. 14th St., Suite 403, New York, NY 10011.

December 3

The Campaign for Peace and Democracy will host a public discussion on "The Crisis in Yugoslavia," co-sponsored with the East and Central Europe Program of the New School for Social Research. Speakers will include Mihajlo Mihajlov, chair, Democracy Committee to Aid Democratic Dissidents in Yugoslavia; Olga Kavran, pro-democracy student activist in Belgrade; Thomas Harrison, associate director, Campaign for Peace and Democracy; and Dr. Tomaz Mastnak, senior research fellow, Slovenian Academy of Sciences. The forum will take place at 7:30 p.m. at the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research, Room 242, 65 Fifth Ave. (between 13th and 14th St.). Admission free. For further information, please contact CPD, P.O. Box 1640, Cathedral Station, NYC 10025. Telephone: (212) 666-5924.

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November 1991 Issue

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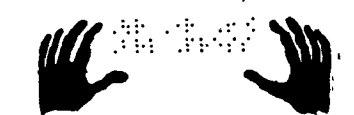
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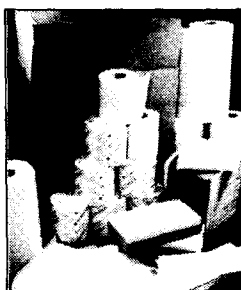
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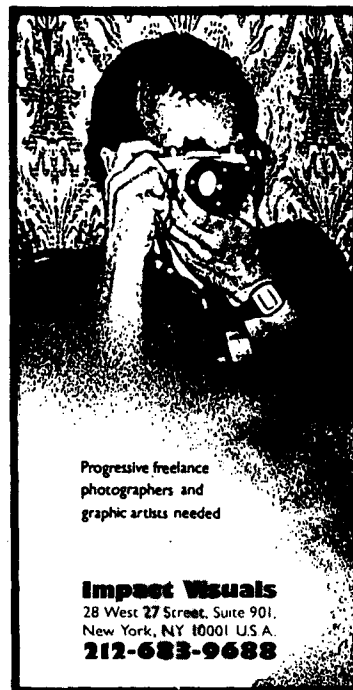


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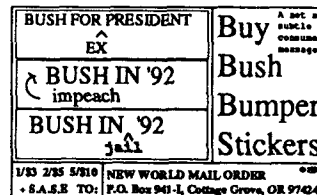
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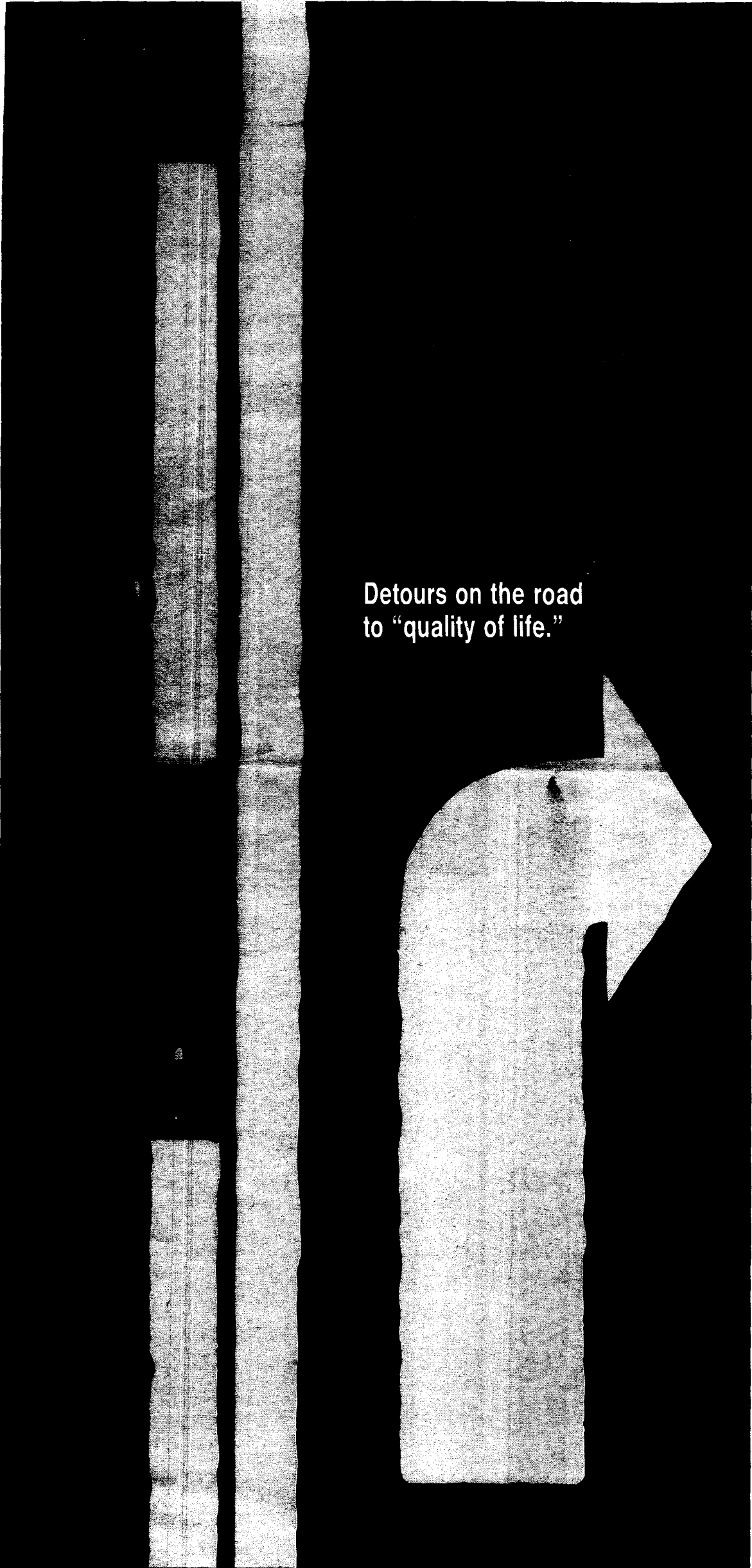
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Detours on the road
to "quality of life."

By Larry Evans

A little over a year ago, I found myself—a former Pittsburgh steelworker and labor journalist—on Louisiana Interstate I-12 heading for a new job in the back bayous of Baton Rouge. A self-described "coon-ass" sports talk DJ entertained me on that hot August night with some cracklin', self-deprecating wit unknown to our effete Yanks of the dead-serious North. "How do you spot a red-neck?" is his first challenge to the audience. Listeners call in with "He's the guy whose girlfriend's hairdo gets caught in the ceiling fan," or "He goes to help his neighbor change his tires—on his house."

"Hey now," continues the DJ, "we've got a David Letterman top ten here: 'Why would anyone want to move to Louisiana?' Reason No. 10: You'd be the smartest person there; No. 9: You could wear a hood to the state legislature; No. 8: You'd be part of the largest controlled cancer experiment in history."

IN THE PITS: It occurred to me that maybe my new neighbors were going through an image crisis similar to what Pittsburgh endured before Louisiana's favorite son Terry Bradshaw brought us Super Bowl respectability. I remember the jokes when the Steelers were perennial bums and before the coming of the Clean Air Act—like... "If God had to give the world an enema, He'd go through Pittsburgh!" We all know that it took an industrial devolution to make the "Smokey City" environmentally "Most Livable."

When I joined the thousands of fellow blue collars who abandoned the "Steel City" in the '80s, it seemed like all that was going on was the politics-as-usual City Council circus, underfunded school systems forcing teachers to the picket line in record numbers, occasional Klan rallies reminding us that things could get a lot worse, hazardous waste dumps turning up under ballfields and a lot of cancer research. I thought to myself—how much worse could Baton Rouge be?

As I entered the suburban outer limits of the "Red Stick" city in the wee hours of the morning, I shut off the A/C, rolled down the windows and inhaled the misty morning air. I quickly rolled 'em back up. I felt like a miner's canary with his barometer gone off the charts. "What the blazes are people

breathing down here?" I asked out loud while gazing at my seven-year-old son still securely wrapped in his reclined-seat slumber. "Ducky" is my only kid, and here he's got asthma. How will he fare in this noxious man-made chemical soup? Just then a crank billboard's message almost spun me out of control—"Welcome to *Cancer Alley*."

To get a closer "reality check," I got off the next exit and took the river road route into the capital, hugging the single-lane ribbons that pass by the relentless string of petro-chemical plants. The journey reminded me of Pittsburgh in the '70s, when I worked as a millhunk in one of the gargantuan mills that lined the once majestic Monongahela River. Passing by these chemical "cities," I found myself awed with the same marvel and intimidation. Just as our blast furnaces once belched U.S. Steel's fire and productive ambitions 24 hours a day into the heavy skies of Pittsburgh, here in the heart of Dixie, Dow and Exxon dominate the landscape with their hissing cauldrons and far-reaching flares.

Though I'd soon be working for the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union and catchin' on to that old familiar macho feeling you get when you know you're part of something so huge, dangerous and important to our prestigious American way of life, I still couldn't fathom why it wouldn't be done cleanly—without sacrificing jobs or the life of the legendary "Mighty Mississipp." I wondered, too, if Pittsburgh's "Steel Curtain" came tumbling down partly because a panicked labor force and their potential environmental allies remained divided to the bitter end.

Now, it's been 13 months and one Mardi Gras since my flirtation with the land of jambalaya and David Duke. I left the spicy activists of the Louisiana Environmental Action Network and their unique Labor/Neighbor Alliance not fully understanding the Napoleonic legal system or Huey Long populism but the good folk's basic motivation was easy enough for me, as a father, to relate to. You see, they're tired of leading the nation in toxic emissions and Superfund dumps. They want to disassociate the throne shape of their state from the slang connotation. And they desperately want to someday eliminate "Cancer Alley" from their children's neighborhood map.

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